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THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

Introduction.

I. Title, JOSHUA, derived not so much fr. the author, as the contents—the hist. of the achievements of J. The first Bk. in the Canon called by name of individual. **II. Author.** Compiled, probably, fr. materials supplied—i. *by J. himself.* (a.) It is plainly the story of a contemporary, and eye-witness, v. 1, vi. 25. (b.) J. is spoken of as the writer, xxiv. 26. (c.) He was a teacher and prophet, vi. 26; 1 K. xvi. 34. (d.) To this may be added uniform Jewish tradition. (e.) It must have been written bef. time of David and Solomon, xv. 63; comp. with 2 S. v. 7—9, and xvi. 10 with 1 K. ix. 16.—ii. *by additions by a later writer,* xix. 47 (comp. Jud. xviii. 27—29, xv. 13, 19; see also Jud. i. 11—16), and xxiv. 29—33. **III. Time.** It comprises a period of ab. 30 yrs. but some say 17, and others 27 yrs. *Hales* places the d. of J. in 1582 B.C., *Usher* in 1443 B.C., or immediately aft. the div. of the land in 1445 B.C.; while acc. to *Tomline, etc.,* his d. took place 18 yrs. aft. this div., *i.e.* 1426 B.C. **IV. Authenticity.** Although the true authorship is unknown; it must, however, have been compiled fr. authentic documents (a.) fr. the accuracy with wh. matters of the greatest public importance are narrated—as the div. of the land, evidently copied fr. some coeval record the authority of wh. did not admit of dispute, (b.) from the discourses it contains, which are apparently given just as they were spoken. **V. Scope** and **Design.** i. To demonstrate the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His word to the patriarchs (a.) Abraham (Ge. xiii. 15)—(b.) Isaac (Ge. xxvi. 4)—(c.) Jacob (Ge. xxxv. 12)—(d.) Joseph (Ge. l. 24)—(e.) also to Moses (Ex. iii. 8). ii. To show the portion of land allotted to ea. tribe.

Joshua.—"Joshua's character is a very noble one, and few blemishes are found in it. The favoured disciple of Moses, he learned to be faithful to the Lord God. Once, indeed, he was too jealous for what he conceived Moses' honour (Nu. xi. 28, 29). He was generally bold and fearless, though an unexpected check, as at Ai, at one time dispirited him. But, with these small exceptions, an able commander, a wise ruler, a faithful servant of the Lord, Joshua shines as a bright star among the noble luminaries with which God has decorated His Church; and his resolution may well be taken as the humble decision of all who bear the name of Christ: 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'" (*L. B. K.*) Speaking of this address, one says, "The appeal was irresistible: the people swore by God not to forsake him who had done all these wonders for them. Thus did Joshua make a covenant with the people, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. It was, for that generation and their posterity, the counterpart of the covenant which Moses had made, on the part of God, with their fathers on Mt. Horeb. Joshua added the record of this great transaction to the book of the law of God, and set up a monument of it in the form of a great stone under an oak, by the sanctuary of Jehovah, perhaps the very oak beneath whose shadow Abraham and Jacob had pitched their tents. . . . This bright period of Jewish history is crowned by the record that 'Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of Jehovah, that He had done for Israel' (Jos. xxiv. 31). The lessons of the wilderness had not been lost upon them. Not in vain had they seen their fathers drop and die, till they were all consumed for their rebellion. We search the sacred history in vain, from the exodus to the captivity, for another generation that was so wholly faithful to Jehovah." (*Smith's Old Test. Hist.* 265.)

Synopsis.

(According to Delitzsch.)

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PART III.—Dying addresses, etc., of Joshua..... xxiii., xxiv.

The Book of Jasher.—The "standing still of the sun" J. confirms by ref. to a work wh. he calls the Bk. of Jasher, or "the Upright" (Jos. x. 13), a work quoted also by Samuel (2 S. i. 18). Some consider this the same as "the Bk. of the Wars of the Lord" (Nu. xxi. 14); others as the Bk. of Genesis; others as the Pentateuch. "It is prob. that fr. the beginning there were certain persons employed in writing the 'Annals' of the Heb. nation, wh. were preserved in the Tab. or Temp. as bks. of ref.; and that the dif. names of 'Bks. of the Wars of the Lord,' of 'Jasher,' and subsequently of 'Days of Chronicles,' are but names of the same work, and indicate the portions descr. dif. times" (*Calmet*). "They are thought to have been poetical compositions. The word *Jasher*, 'the Righteous,' or 'Upright,' may possibly mean the *standard* authentic bk.; while some consider the word to imply a record of the actions of *upright* and *worthy* men" (*Pinnock*). [The Bk. of Jasher, published in London, 1751, and reprinted in Bristol (by Philip Rose, of 20, Broadmead) is a shameless forgery, and full of the grossest absurdities, utterly unworthy of serious refutation.]

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Joshua appointed the leader of Israel

a De. xxxiii. 1.

b Nu. xiii. 8.

c He. iv. 8.

vv. 1—4. *J. Saurin, Historical Sermons*, iii. 1.

v. 2. *Dr. G. Lawson, Sermons*, i.

v. 5. *F. E. Tuson, Sermons*, 63.

"Though the great man rises above the level of common humanity, he is no more to be looked upon as distinct and separate from the masses beneath him than the loftiest mountain that bathes its head in heaven can be said to be independent of the earth, from whose surface it rises in its sublimity and grandeur: pay not thy praise to lofty things alone; the plains are everlasting as the hills."—*Dr. Ferguson.*

"I have learned by much observation that nothing will satisfy a patriot but peace."—*Junius.*

d Dr. Morrison.

his encouragements

vv. 6, 7. *Tim. Dwight, D.D., Sermons*, i. 536.

v. 7. *Abp. Hutton, A Serm.*

v. 8. *W. Strong, Sermons*, 617; *Bp.*

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—5. (1) **servant of the Lord,** official title of Moses, De. xxxiv. 5; comp. *man of God.*[a] **Joshua,** orig. Oshea;[b] obs. prefix *Je;* and Gk. form of word *Jesus.*[c] **minister,** official attendant, so best acquainted with Mos.' principles. (2) **this Jordan,** wh. was to be E. boundary of their land, so crossing it was taking possession. (3) **sole of your foot,** fig. used bec. reference is to *land,* on wh. *foot* rested. (4) **this Lebanon,** tho' distant, it was visible fr. their position at the time, and formed N. boundary. **Euphrates,** Ge. ii. 14, xv. 18. **Hittites,** put for Canaanites generally, as being the dominant tribe. **great sea,** Mediterranean. (5) **stand before thee,** effectually to resist you.

The character and death of Moses (*v.* 2).—We have here—I. The character of Moses: "My servant." Moses was a servant of God by—1. The consecration of his powers; 2. The homage of his mind; 3. The obedience of his life; 4. The philanthropy of his actions. II. The death of Moses. This was—1. A penal event; 2. Sudden; 3. Solitary; 4. Subsequently attended by extraordinary circumstances.—*Mu in Sketches*, iv. 179.

The materials of which God can make great men.—That solitary monk, whose attention has been drawn to the volume of eternal truth, and who is so anxiously perusing its long-neglected pages: what is likely to become of him? He will prove one of the noblest spiritual heroes which modern ages have produced; one that will bid defiance to popes and cardinals, and be prepared at the call of duty to march fearlessly onward, even should there be as many devils in the place to which that duty urged him as there were tiles upon the houses. That profane tinker, who has begun to weep on account of his sins, and earnestly to pray for mercy: what is likely to become of him? God will turn the tinker into a successful preacher, and not only so, but into a matchless dreamer; and by his prison thoughts he is to be the means of helping many a weary pilgrim onward from the city of destruction, over one hill of difficulty and another, even to the shining city above. That cobbler on his stall, with his serious musings, while stitching and hammering away: what is likely to become of him? God is going to make the humble artisan into a Dr. Carey, and appoint him His own instrument for placing in the hands of the teeming myriads of the East the glorious charter of salvation. So with some around us, such as that boy in the Sabbath class, once so thoughtless, but of late so attentive to his teacher: what will become of him? Who can tell? Perhaps, when the Church history of China will be written in after ages, an answer to the question may there be given.[d]

6—9. (6) **strong,** firm in faith, steadfast in principle, not easily moved by surprising or depressing events. **good courage,** indic. the activity and enterprise needful for his undertaking. Repeated *vv.* 7, 9. Qualities needed by military leader. **divide,** *etc.,* arrange locations of the tribes. (7) **prosper,** Heb. *act wisely,* guided by the law. (8) **out . . mouth,** *i.e.* he must be constantly thinking and speaking about it. Minute and practical acquaintance with it would sustain his own spirit, and give him

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constant good counsel.[a] (9) **dismayed,** of this there was much danger, as undertaking was so great.

Courageous in spirit (*v.* 7).—The Christian ought to be of a very courageous spirit, in order that he may glorify the Lord by enduring trials in an heroic manner. I. If he be fearful and faint-hearted it will dishonour his God. II. Besides, what a bad example it is! One downcast believer makes twenty souls sad. III. Moreover, unless courage is kept up, Satan will be too much for you. IV. Further, labour is light to a man of cheerful spirit; and success waits upon cheerfulness. He who sows in hope shall reap in joy; therefore "be thou strong and very courageous."[b]

Be of good courage.—God's people should be of good courage, in reference to the condition unto which God hath called them. God hath appointed all Christians to be soldiers. A sacrament is a soldier's oath. When we were baptised we took press money, and vowed to serve under the colours of Christ, and as manful soldiers to fight against the world, the flesh, the devil; and as oft as we have been at the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, we have renewed our solemn and sacred obligation in that kind in reference to Christ, who is called "the Captain of the Lord's host." Wisdom is not more necessary for a counsellor, nor eloquence for an orator, than courage for a soldier."[c] Fuller observes that this counsel is repeated five times as recorded in Scripture, and may have been repeated even more. "Was Joshua a dunce or a coward? Did his wit or his valour want an edge, that the same precept must so often be pressed upon him? Neither is true, but God saw it needful that Joshua should have courage of proof, who was to encounter both the froward Jew and the fierce Canaanite. Though metal on metal, colour on colour, be false heraldry, line on line, precept on precept, is true divinity."

10—15. (10) **officers,** *shoterim.*[a] (11) **victuals,**[b] not manna, as it did not keep: order given in anticip. of manna ceasing after their crossing the river.[c] **within three days,** order prob. not given until after return of the spies. (12) **Reubenites,** *etc.*, the portion of Is. wh. was permitted to settle E. of Jordan.[d] (13) **this land,** the country of Sihon and Og. In it Is. was then located. (14) **armed,** officered, or marshalled under five leaders in approved caravan order.[e] (15) **rest,** fr. enemies, and by settlement in the land.

Joshua's marching orders (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. Observe the vigour with which Joshua prosecuted his work. He wasted no time after his installation as Moses' successor. II. Notice the prudence with which this vigour was combined. Provisions to be prepared at once: all to be in a state of continual readiness. Learn:—We know not how soon we may have to cross the river. Are we ready for the march?

Serving the Lord heartily.—A girl of thirteen said to her teacher, "Oh, miss, I wish I could do something for Jesus. I see others having tract districts, etc., etc., but I seem to have no time or opportunity for thus showing my love to Him; yet I *do* love Him, teacher, and I would *so* like to work for Him." "Nellie, dear," said her teacher, "you can show your love to Jesus, even without any active service of this sort, which at present you cannot render Him. Give me your Bible, and let us look at the

Beveridge, Thesaurus; T. Durrington, Fam. Deco. ii. 142. *v.* 9. *Dr. Featley, Cla Mys.* 231; *Bp. Hare, Wks.* i. 62; *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 257; *J. C. M Bellew, Srms.* 383.

a Ps. i. 2; cxix. 9—11.

b Spurgeon.

"The law of God is said to be in the mouth when the words of it are before us, pronounced either openly or silently; that is, when we speak either to ourselves or to others of its contents. 'Day and night' is evidently at all suitable seasons and opportunities, especially when alone."—*Schmidt.*

c S. Ash.

he prepares Israel to cross Jordan

a Ex. v. 6; De. xvi. 18, xx. 5.

b Fr. L. *victualis,* through F. *victuailles,* belonging to food; *victus,* nourishment.

c "It does not appear that manna ever formed the whole and sole sustenance of the people see Nu. xx. 1—5."—*Syk. Com.*

d Nu. xxxii. 33.

e Ex. xiii. 18, marg. Calmet thinks that these officers were heralds, as we should now term them, who were only sent forth on certain occasions like the present

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Scottis of opinion that this command was given after the events mentioned in cap. ii., since the spies were away more than three days.

twenty-third verse of the third of Colossians. 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord.' It matters not whether we are at school learning our lessons from morning till night, or at home helping our mothers in the housework, or in different situations; the Bible tells us whatsoever we have to do may be done 'to the Lord,' and for His glory; therefore, Nellie, strive to live your life for Jesus. Let these four words, 'as to the Lord,' be the motive for every action, and you may be sure He will be glorified."

Israel promises to obey Joshua

16–18. (16) The immediate and hearty response of these tribes is worthy of high commendation.[a] (17) **Lord . . thee,** this the true ground of obedience, and the security of success. (18) **be strong,** men can recognise the value of those qualities wh. God requires, *vv.* 6, 7, 9.

The moral advantages of a good organisation.—Here we have God electing Himself a leader for His people. Three things about the true leader which are most notable:—(1) He must be directly called of God; (2) Being thus called, he will walk constantly in the Divine counsel; (3) Walking thus, he shall achieve the most distinguished success. As in the case of Joshua, so in the Church God has appointed leaders. Every man has a place, and ought to keep to it. When this principle is recognised we shall get good organisation; and such organisation would—I. Facilitate the development of individual talent. II. Consolidate the Christian society assembling in one place. III. Present the most formidable front to the enemy. IV. Promote a most healthful spiritual discipline.[b]

Formation of courage.—The love of queen and country, the love of home, the cry of "Our hearths and our altars," has made many a coward brave. Faith also will produce courage, even without any very deep affection. For instance, how the natural courage of the British soldier was raised to the heroic by the knowledge that Wellington was with the army, and that his genius was present in every movement executed by the battalions. And when faith in the wisdom of a general, and love to his person and the cause he represents, meet together in a soldier's spirit, the bright flame of courage rises fierce and steady. Garibaldi, his men and their deeds, will furnish abundant illustration of these principles. In the same way, love to God and confidence in Him will produce courage in His service; and the lack of it shows a deficiency of faith and love. Thus it is that the fearful find themselves in such sad company in Rev. xxi. 8.

a Nu. xxxii. 17, 18.

v. 17. *Dr. J. Erskine, Serms.* ii. 335.

b *Dr. Parker.*

It has been observed that Joshua is one of the very few saints in Scripture of whom no fault is recorded. This also is to be noted about him, that "his character is to an extent overshadowed by the grandeur of the events and circumstances in which he was placed."

"Had I a dozen sons,—each in my love alike,—I had rather have eleven die nobly for their country, than one voluptuously surfeit out of action." — *Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

two men sent as spies to Jericho

1–7. (1) **Shittim,**[a] lit. *acacia trees.*[b] **spy secretly,** dangerous but necess. work. Practical information of country, etc., is of utmost value to invading army. **Jericho,** *place of fragrance*:[c] a rich and strongly fortified place[d] (Nu. xxii. 1). **harlot's house,** some[e] would read, *a woman, an innkeeper,* but text is correct. (2) **told,** by sentinels posted in this time of danger. (3) **bring forth,** to be killed as spies. (4) **hid them,** lit. *him, i.e.* each one in a separate place. **wist . . were,** no doubt she had suspicions, poss. not actual knowledge about them. Sc. does not commend her equivocation. (5) **shutting of gate,** done

a Nu. xxv. 1, xxxiii. 49.

b "Acacia groves still remain in the vicinity." — *Ayre.*

c "Some derive name fr. word for *new moon,* fr. crea-

at sunset in E. cities. (6) **roof**, flat. **flax**, laid to be dried; piled in little stacks three or four feet high. (7) **fords**,[f] expecting return of spies to camp. **shut the gate**, to be sure of them if still in city.

The spies at the house of Rahab.—I. Prudence of Joshua in sending spies. 1. Great men must see with other people's eyes; 2. Faith in God's promise not to supersede proper means; 3. Zealous men were ready to imperil their lives. II. Providence of God in directing the spies to this place. III. The piety of Rahab. 1. She welcomed them; 2. Hid them; 3. Hoodwinked the officers (yet it is plain she betrayed her country, and told a lie).[g]

—*The fords of the Jordan.*—The more southern fords were in the neighbourhood of ancient Jericho. Hereabouts are the bathing-places annually visited by the pilgrims of the Latin and Greek Churches respectively; and tradition makes this also the scene of the baptism of Him who was "made under the law" for the deliverance of both Jew and Gentile. Here the spies sent out by Joshua (Josh. ii. 7) must have crossed the stream; and here the Israelites assailed the Moabites in the days of Ehud (Judg. iii. 28). When David passed over the river to attack the Syrian (2 Sam. x. 17) he must have taken this route to Helam; here he crossed in the day of his sorrow and humiliation, and came to Mahanaim (xvii. 22, 24), and by these fords he returned in triumph when God had turned his mourning into joy (xix. 15).

8–13. (8) **laid down**, composing themselves for the night. (9) **your terror**, terror of you. Rahab herself had more *faith* than fear. (10) **heard**, by reports wh. spread with astonishing rapidity. **Sihon**, *etc.*, Nu. xxi. 24. (11) **melt**, Ex. xxiii. 27; De. ii. 25, xi. 25. (12) **true token**, pledge wh. ye will faithfully keep. (13) **alive**, in the time of destruction she knew was coming.

Rahab protecting the spies.—Consider—I. The service she rendered. 1. What she did; 2. From what principle she acted (He. xi. 31). II. The reward she obtained. 1. She and all her family were preserved; 2. She is enrolled amongst the number of God's most eminent saints; 3. She was made an ancestor of the Messiah Himself. Learn—(1) There is no person so vile but he or she may become an eminent saint; (2) Faith, if true, will uniformly produce good works; (3) Whatever we do for God shall most assuredly be richly rewarded.

Illustrations of kindness.—The Marquis de Renty, an illustrious nobleman, having a command in the French army, had the misfortune to receive a challenge from a person of distinction in the same service. The Marquis returned for answer, that he was ready to convince the gentleman that he was in the wrong; or, if he could not convince him, he was ready to ask his pardon. The other, not satisfied with this reply, insisted upon his meeting him with the sword. To which the Marquis sent this answer, that he was resolved not to do it, since God and his king had forbidden it; and that all the endeavours he had used to pacify him did not proceed from any fear of him, but of Almighty God and His displeasure; that he would go every day about his usual business; and if he assaulted him he would make him repent it. The angry man, not able to provoke the Marquis to a duel, one day drew his sword, and attacked him. The Marquis soon wounded and disarmed both him and his second, with the assistance of a servant

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cent-like plain, formed by an amphitheatre of hills, in wh. it stood."—*Jamieson.*

d "It was the key of W. Palestine, as standing at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains."—*Stanley.*

e Josephus, Targ., etc.

f Jord. is crossed at several well-known fords, two just below Sea of Gal., one above and one below the pilgrim's bathing-place, just opposite Jericho." — *Smith's Dict. on Jordan.* See *Ep. Hall, Rahab Contemp.*

g M. Henry.

Rahab extorts a promise of safety

v. 11. *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 268.

C. Simeon, M.A.

"Good works are works of piety, works of righteousness, works of charity; every work that comes from a good cause, commanded by a rule of goodness, performed in a good manner, to a good end, is a good work, whether the object matter be God or man."—*Anthony Burgess.*

"That inexhaustible goodnature, which is the most precious gift of heaven, spreading itself like oil over the troubled sea of thought, and keeping the mind smooth and equable in the roughest

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weather."—*Washington Irving*

"Kindnesses do not always produce what we expect; from a hand which we hate they are regarded as offences; the more we lavish on one who may hate us, the more arms we give to him who may betray us."—*Corneille.*

they escape from Jericho

a 2 Co. xi. 33.

b "Behind the city rose the jagged range of the white limestone mountains of Judea, here presenting one of the few varied and beautiful outlines that can be seen amongst the southern hills of Palestine."—*Stanley.*

"Garments that have once one rent in them are subject to be torn on every nail; and glasses that are once cracked are soon broken, such is man's good name once tainted with just reproach."—*Bp. Hall.*

"Heaven in sunshine will requite the kind."—*Byron.*

c C. Stanford.

the scarlet thread

a "This cord was spun of threads dyed with cochineal, &c. of a deep and bright scarlet colour, so easily distinguished." — *Spk. Com.*

"As ciphers added one by one in an endless row to the left hand of a unit are of

who attended him. Here did this truly Christian nobleman show the difference between a brutish and a Christian courage: for, leading them to his tent, he refreshed them with wine and cordials, caused their wounds to be dressed, and their swords to be restored to them; then dismissed them with Christian advice, and was never heard to mention the affair afterwards, even to his nearest friends. It was a usual saying with this great man, "That there was more true courage and generosity in bearing and forgiving an injury for the love of God, than in requiting it with another; in suffering, rather than avenging, because the thing was really more difficult." Adding, "That bulls and bears had courage enough; but it was brutal courage; whereas that of men should be such as became rational beings and Christians."

14—16. (14) **our life for yours,** marg. more exact, *instead of you to die.* Virtual oath; may God put us to death if we fail thee. (15) **cord,** strong enough to bear weight of a man. **upon the wall,** prob. town wall was back wall of house, so window looked toward the country. Sometimes in E. cities houses are built on the walls with overhanging windows. Comp. escape of Paul fr. Dam.[a] (16) **she said,** had said, previously. **mountain,**[b] Quarantania (now Jebel Karantul) 1,200 to 1,400 feet high.

Rahab requited.—I. A solemn assurance of safety: "our life for yours." II. A prudent condition: "If ye utter not." A timely escape: "through the window." IV. A sage word of advice.

Kindness to an enemy.—A slave who had, by the force of his sterling worth, risen high in the confidence of his master, saw one day trembling in the slave-market a negro, whose grey head and bent form showed him to be in the last weakness of old age. He implored his master to purchase him. He expressed his surprise, but gave his consent. The old man was bought and conveyed to the estate. When there, he who had pleaded for him took him to his own cabin, placed him on his own bed, fed him at his own board, gave him water from his own cup; when he shivered, carried him into the sunshine; when he drooped in the hut bore him softly to the shade. "What is the meaning of all this?" asked a witness. "Is he your father?" "No." "Is he your brother?" "No." "Is he, then, your friend?" "No; he is my enemy. Years ago he stole me from my native village, and sold me for a slave; and the good Lord has said, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.'"[c]

17—20. (17) **thine oath,** oath made to thee, and in thy favour. (18) **line of scarlet,** as a sign of the house, and token of confidence in them.[a] It was prob. not twisted about the lattice, but left to hang down, and was in sight of Is. while marching round the walls. (19) **go out,** *etc.*, on the day of entrance of Israel into the city; the protection was only to extend to the house in wh. they found shelter. (20) **and . . business,** this precaution necess. to *her* safety, not theirs. If she told of her private arrangement, people of city might kill her, or remove the token. The spies might, however, have meant, keep our secret while we are hiding.

The scarlet thread.—I. A remembrance to her of mercy she was to expect. II. A remembrance to Israel of a great kindness

done to the spies. III. A pledge of safety to all who were in the house. Learn—1. So Israel of old was safe behind the blood-sprinkled doors; 2. So our salvation is secured by a crimson sign.

Scarlet thread sacred.—The scarlet thread, in this instance, might be nothing more than a sign: it is, however, sacred among the Hindoos. When the devotees hear the history of the god Pulliár, which takes up twenty-one days, a scarlet thread is tied round the right arm, which shows that they are engaged in a sacred duty, and that during that period "they will not commit sin." When the priest whispers the *ubatheasam* in the ear of a youth, the thread is tied in the same way, to denote the same thing. On the day of marriage the scarlet is bound round the right wrist, but is taken off on the fourth day. When a person learns to fence, or goes into battle, the thread is fixed round the right arm or right ankle. The priest also sometimes binds it round the wrist of a person in the article of death. It is called *kapu*, which signifies "guard or protector;" and is applied also, in the same sense, to bracelets, armlets, or anklets. A person having on the scarlet thread will not be interrupted; and during the period he will neither shave nor bathe, and will endeavour to be very moral. *See* Gen. xxxviii. 28.[b]

21—24. (21) **bound . . window,** not at once, but when city was surrounded, then it would not be seen by inhabitants. (22) **abode there,** in caves of the limestone ridge. **all the way,** bet. Jericho and fords of Jordan. (23) **returned,** to this two things necess., to come down fr. mountain, and swim over Jordan. (24) **faint,** Heb. melt.

The line of scarlet thread.—Regard this "line of scarlet thread" as—I. A means of deliverance. The cord being seen, the house would be spared. II. A sign of faith. Its presence in the window would show that Rahab believed the promises of the spies, and trusted to them to save her and her family. III. A double memento of gratitude. It would—1. Remind the spies of their obligation to Rahab; 2. Remind Rahab of her deliverance through the spies. Learn—(1) Little things sometimes work most good: had Rahab made some great and showy sign to effect her deliverance, her own people might have suspected and punished her; (2) Believing faith always meets with reward.[a]

True friendship.—

Friendship, which, once determined, never swerves,
Weighs ere it trusts, but weighs not ere it serves;
And soft-eyed Pity, and Forgiveness bland,
And melting Charity, with open hand;
And artless Love, believing and believed,
And honest Confidence, which ne'er deceived;
And Mercy, stretching out, ere Want can speak,
To wipe the tear which stains Affliction's cheek.[b]

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no value, but, on the right hand, rapidly multiply its power, so, although good works are of no avail to make a man a Christian, yet a Christian's good works are both pleasing to God and profitable to men."—*Arnot.*

"Health, beauty, vigour, riches, and all the other things called goods, operate equally as evils to the vicious and unjust, as they do as benefits to the just."—*Plato.*

[b] *Roberts.*

the spies return to Joshua

[a] *J. Hoatson.*

"Friendship consists properly in mutual offices and a generous strife in alternate acts of kindness. But he who does a kindness to an ungrateful person sets his seal to a flint, and sows his seed upon the sand. Upon the former he makes no impression, and from the latter he finds no production."—*South.*

"Kindness in ourselves is the honey that blunts the sting of unkindness in another."—*Landor.*

[b] *H. More.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—6. (1) **Shittim,** Jos. ii. 1, some six miles fr. the river. (2) **three days,** by Heb. reckoning *one entire day*, includ. evening of arrival and morning of crossing. **officers,** Jos. i. 10. (3) **ark,** Ex. xxv. 10; when at rest it was in place of honour, the

Israel removes from Shittim to Jordan

[a] Nu. iv. 15; Jos.

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vi. 6; 1 Ki. viii. 3–6.

v. 4. *J. Hambleton, Serms.* 446.

v. 5. *W. Scougall, M.A., Wks.* 210; *J. Willison, Wks.* 580; *Dr. E. B. Pusey, Serm.* i. 35. "A master-giveth his servant work to do, but he cannot give him strength to work; but God, as He ents us out work, so He gives us strength. 'My strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness.' 'Give Thy strength unto Thy servant.'"—*T. Watson.* Lord Dundas, being wished a happy New Year, replied, "It had need be happier than the last; for I never knew one happy day in it." Wilberforce said, "The last year has been the happiest of my life." Romaine's New Year's wish for his people was, "God grant that this may be a year famous for believing!" "A man's strength does not stand in himself, but in leaning on God. The middle of the Atlantic is as safe as any other part when a storm is raging. And a child is as safe as a strong man, because if the ship does not go down, both are preserved; but if it does go down, they are both drowned. The difference in their strength is nothing when it is the Atlantic."—*Beecher.*

[b] *R. A. Griffin.*

God promises to cut

centre of the camp; during a march usually in middle of procession. **priests the Levites,** disting. fr. Kohathite Levites, the usual bearers; this a solemn occasion.[a] (4) **space,** of nearly a mile; so that all might see the miracle. (5) **sanctify yourselves,** *see* Ex. xix. 10, 14, 22, 23. (6) **take up,** lift on shoulder by the poles. **before,** instead of in the middle.

Looking out into the New Year (*v.* 4; for a New Year's serm.).—Introduction:—Picture Israel's state: forty years of wandering, but now the wilderness is passed. We can readily understand the various emotions actuating the host. There are the *young,* revelling in dreams of victory, honour, wealth; the *aged,* seeing beyond Jordan the land of their grave; the *weak,* agitated and distressed by the excitement of the times; the *strong,* panting for the fight; *little children* asking their strange questions—*all* feel new emotions, new ambitions: all are making resolutions, and preparing themselves. Our position this morning is very analogous to theirs. We stand as travellers about to enter on a new journey in an unknown country. As we stand on the threshold of our journey let us commune with our own hearts. Listen to—I. The language of fear: it points forward, saying, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Consider—1. The uncertainty of human things; 2. The deceitfulness of sin. II. The Gospel of faith. In the future there may be death, bereavements, afflictions; but nothing save our own perversity can make them calamities. Faith points to the *grave,* and cries, "O death, where is thy sting?" To *losses,* "What can harm you, if you be the followers of that which is good?" To *temptations,* God hath said, "My grace is sufficient for you." Faith indulges in many strange but blessed paradoxes. We may be—1. Most happy when all combines to make us miserable: Paul singing in the dungeon; 2. Richest when poorest; 3. Most glorious when covered with shame—martyrs; 4. Most renowned when least known—angels rejoicing. III. The song of hope. We may prosper in the family, in the church, in the soul—doubts dispelled and faith stronger. IV. The lamentation of humility. What if you have been negligent and half-hearted? Think of Peter, and of Mark. V. The psalm of experience. Do not forget the former mercies of the Lord: they all cry, "Our God is gracious."[b]

The source of the Jordan.—The Jordan is the principal river of Palestine; it derives its name (Jor-Yar-dan, the river of Dan) because its rise was in the vicinity of the little city of Dan. Its true source is in two fountains at Paneas, a city better known by its subsequent name of Cesarea Philippi, at the foot of Antilibanus. It flows from beneath a cave at the foot of a precipice, in the sides of which are several niches with Greek inscriptions. During many miles of its course it continues to be a small insignificant rivulet. It flows due south through the centre of the country, intersecting the Lake Merom, anciently called Somonochitis, and the Sea of Galilee, and it loses itself in the Dead Sea, though it is probable that in very ancient times it pursued its course to the Red Sea, until the convulsions occasioned by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the subsequent filling up of the bottom of the valley by the drifting sand, caused the stoppage of its waters.

7–13. (7) **magnify,**[a] by witness of great miracle, like that of divided sea, which honoured Mos. before Is. (8) **brink,** edge

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or border. (9) **come hither**, draw near, gather round, so that all may hear. (10) **living God**,[b] as opposed to senseless, helpless idols of the nations around. **Canaanites**, *etc.*, Ge. xv. 18–21; De. vii. 1. (11) **Lord . . earth**, Jos. iii. 1; Ps. xlvii. 2. (12) **twelve men**, to carry stones, Jos. iv. 2. (13) The whole bed of the stream should dry up.

An important lesson well taught (*v.* 7).—I. The lesson itself: that God was with Joshua, as he had been with Moses. Important that the people should have confidence in their new leader. II. How it was to be imparted. By a crowning success and a great prodigy, in the passage of Jordan.

Description of the Jordan.—"The Jordan would scarcely be dignified with the name of river in America, and its appearance is, in reality, quite insignificant. It is, however, deep, narrow, and very muddy, and hurries away to the sea with great velocity. In approaching the river you descend several benches or terraces, and though much swollen with the rains and the melting snows of Lebanon (at the time of our visit), it was still fifteen or twenty feet below its proper banks. . . . These are the banks that were flooded when the Israelites passed over. Nor was the miracle unnecessary. It would be impossible for such a host to cross the Jordan at the same season of the year without either a bridge or a miracle, for boats could do nothing in such a current, and it is too deep to ford. Travellers have differed widely in their description of the Jordan, principally from two causes—visiting it at different seasons of the year, and at different places. When and where I saw it, the width might have been twenty yards, and its depth ten feet."[c]

14–17. (14) **removed . . tents**, indic. full preparation for the passage; they took the tents with them. (15) **overfloweth . . harvest**, *brimful*, fills all its banks, this occurs in April or May, fr. melting of snows on Antilibanus. During this time river cannot be forded. (16) **Adam**,[a] near Mt. Sartabch, in northern part of the Ghor. Thirty miles fr. Is. encampment. **Salt Sea**, called also Dead Sea. (17) **in the midst**, middle of the bed, prob. at place of the usual ford. **dry ground**, comparatively such.[b]

The priests in the midst of Jordan; or moral firmness.—Introduction: Look at Israel's journey in the wilderness as illustrating—(1) The future difficulty in life's journey; the Jordan of death; strange, perilous, necessary is its passage; (2) The true guide in life's journey; (3) The final deliverance in life's journey: "all the people were passed clean over." Note particularly the sublime calmness of the priests; and consider concerning their firmness that—I. It was rational in its foundation. Its foundation was in the Word of God. It is more rational to trust in the Word of God than in the laws of nature, because—1. His words bind Him to action, the laws of nature do not; 2. Deviation from His word would be a far more serious thing to the universe than deviation from the laws of nature; 3. He has departed from the laws of nature, but has never swerved an iota from His word. II. It was salutary in its influence. This incident suggests—1. The force of human influence; 2. The philosophy of useful influence.[c]

The Jordan.—It was in the month of April that I visited this "holy place" on the Jordan. It was already the time of harvest, and the streams of

off the waters of Jordan

a Jos. iv. 14.

b De. v. 26.

"The Roman censors took a ring off the finger of the son of Africanus, in which his father's image was engraven, because he was degenerated from the noble qualities of his father; not allowing him to wear on his finger what he did not bear in his mind. Neither will God suffer any to bear His name who do not bear His image." —*Spencer.*

c Dr. Thomson.

the passage of Jordan

a The passage should run, "rose up an heap far away, by Adam, the city wh. is beside Zarthan." *Spk. Comm.*

b "The river about Jericho has a firm pebbly bottom on wh. the host might pass without inconvenience." —*Jamieson.*

See *Bp. Hall, Jordan Div. Contemp.* v. 17. *R. P. Buddicom, Christian Exod.* ii. 305; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 281. The Rev. W. Cowper, sometime minister at Stirling, and afterwards Bishop of Galloway, thus spoke of his dissolution to his friends "Death is somewhat dreary, and the streams of

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that Jordan wh. is between us and our Canaan run furiously; but they stand still when the ark comes."

c Dr. Thomas.

for the people of Jericho were reaping their little fields upon the plain. And we are told that "Jordan overfloweth all its banks at the time of harvest." The fact is still true, though Palestine is changed; the heavy rains of early spring falling on the northern mountains, and the winter snow melting on the sides of Hermon, send a thousand tributaries to the sacred river. It rises to the top of the lower banks, and when I was there, the muddy, swollen waters had flowed over and crossed portions of the meadows on each side.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—5. (1) **Lord spake,** not at this partic. time; instructions were given before, but are restated here to complete the account. (2) **twelve men,** one to represent ea. tribe, Jos. iii. 12. They would wait on E. bank of river to receive Josh.'s order. (3) **midst,** fr. bed of river, wh. was pebbly and rocky. **lodging place,** convenient situation some little distance fr. river bank. (4) **prepared,** poss. referring to their election by the tribes, and approval by Jos.; more prob. it means, set ready, appointed. (5) **before the ark,** but after the whole host had crossed.

The stones of memorial.—Consider the lessons to be learned—I. From their number. The twelve tribes of Israel all passed over. Ancient promises of God fulfilled. II. From their original resting-place. The bed of the river. A visible proof of the miracle. The stones henceforth as dry as Israel's feet had been. III. Their final destination. Israel's first lodging in Canaan. IV. Their historical use. To set forth, not the prowess of Joshua, but the mercy of God.

The Jordan.—This river, being the principal stream of Palestine, has acquired a distinction much greater than its geographical importance could have given. It is sometimes called "the river," by way of eminence, being, in fact, almost the only stream of the country which continues to flow in summer. The river rises about an hour and a quarter's journey (say three miles, or three miles and a quarter) north-east from Banias, the ancient Cesarea Philippi, in a plain near a hill called Tel-el-Kadi. Here there are two springs near each other, one smaller than the other, whose waters very soon unite, forming a rapid river from twelve to fifteen yards across, which rushes over a stony bed into the lower plain, where it is joined by a river which rises to the north-east of Banias. A few miles below their junction the now considerable river enters the small lake of Houle, or Semechonitis (called "the waters of Merom" in the Old Testament). This lake receives several other mountain streams, some of which seem to have as good claim to be regarded as forming the Jordan as that to which it is given in the previous statement; and it would, perhaps, be safest to consider the lake formed by their union as the real source of the Jordan. After leaving the lake, the river proceeds about twelve miles to the larger lake, called by various names, but best known as the Sea of Galilee; after leaving which it flows about seventy miles farther, until it is finally lost in the Dead or Salt Sea.[a]

6—9. (6) **sign,**[a] a standing record of mirac. passing of Jordan. No inscription on it gave information, but its existence started

stones for a memorial

"Spoil not thy memory, nor make it bad by suspecting it. How canst thou find that true which thou wilt not trust? Marshal thy notions into a handsome method. One will carry twice more weight, trust and packed up in bundles, than when it lies untowardly flapping about his shoulders.' — *T. Fuller.*

"Memory is a recurrence of sensations, which existed formerly, produced by the operations of some internal changes, after the causes by which the first sensations were excited have ceased to exist." —*Horace Welby.*

"Aristotle calls it the scribe of the soul; and Bernard calls the memory the stomach of the soul, because it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits."—*T. Watson.*

a Dr. Kitto.

the purpose of the memorial

inquiries. (7) **cut off**, stayed fr. flowing; there is no indic. that it was a mere path bet. heaps of water, as is too often imagined. (8) **children . . so,** *i.e.* by their twelve representatives. (9) **twelve . . Jordan,** another set of stones, making heap in bed of river, prob. at place of usual ford, and visible above usual water line. **unto this day,** the time when Bk. of Josh. was written, at least twenty years after.

Youthful curiosity.—This implies—I. That children were expected to be observant, not listless and indifferent. II. That parents were expected to be familiar with the great events of their country's history. III. That the inquiries of curious youth were to meet with intelligent and ready answers. Learn—1. We have many things—buildings, ruins, monuments, etc.—to awaken our curiosity; 2. We have many sources of information—books, teachers, etc.

Memorial stones.—The practice of setting up a stone in memorial of mercies received is still common in the East. Mr. Morier describes what he witnessed in ascending the rock of Istakhar, in Persia:—"We ascended on the north-west side, winding round the foot of the rock, and making our way through narrow and intricate paths. I remarked that our old guide every here and there placed a stone on a conspicuous bit of rock, or two stones one upon the other, at the same time uttering some words which I learnt were a prayer for our safe return. This explained to me what I had frequently seen before in the East, and particularly on a high road leading to a great town, whence the town is first seen, and where the Eastern traveller sets up his stone, accompanied by a devout exclamation, as it were in token of his safe arrival!"

10–13. (10) **finished,** passing of people, and ceremony of carrying out the stones. **hasted,** indic. either that their faith was mingled with fear, or that haste was needed to get so large a host across in a given time. (11) **clean passed over,** people, flocks, and baggage, all safe on further side. So they were able to watch the ark come *out of* Jord., as they had watched it *go in.* (12) fulfilling their pledge.[a] **Moses spake,** Nu. xxxii. 20—33. (13) **plains of Jericho,** part of the Arabah.[b]

Passing over the flood (*v.* 10).—I. How different was this haste to enter Canaan from their reluctance forty years before. They had learned obedience in the school of affliction. II. They hasted in the van to secure the safe passage of the rear. III. They hasted, yet marched in order. IV. They hasted, animated by hope, not as when passing through the sea impelled by fear. V. They hasted as conquerors, not as fugitives. VI. They hasted, being ready. Apply—To the river of death. May we all joyfully press forward, and all pass clean over.

Terraces and fords of the Jordan.—"The river runs between successive terraces, one, two, or three, according as the hills approach more or less near to its banks. It is crossed by three, or at most four, well-known fords. The first and second are marked by remains of Roman bridges, immediately below the Sea of Galilee, and again immediately above its confluence with the Jabbok; the third and fourth immediately above and below the present bathing-place of the pilgrims opposite Jericho. . . The actual stream of the Jordan, as it flows between these banks, is from sixty to a hundred feet wide, and varies from six to four

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a "The erection of cairns, or huge piles of stones, as monuments of remarkable incidents, has been common amongst all people, especially in the early and rude periods of their history. They are the established means of perpetuating the memory of important transactions."—*Jamieson.*

v. 6. *J. Bullar, Lay Lect.* 134. It was the remark of John Newton, when his memory had almost completely gone, that he could never forget two things:—1. That he was a great sinner; 2. That Jesus Christ was a great and mighty Saviour.

Israel's vanguard

a Jos. i. 16—18.

b "The higher terrace of Jordan, about seven miles broad. The mountains here recede somewhat fr. the river, and leave a level and fertile space."—*Spk. Comm.*

"Many people have their own god; and he is much what the French may mean when they talk of *Le bon Dieu*—very indulgent, rather weak, near at hand when we want anything, but far away, out of sight, when we have a mind to do wrong. Such a god is as much an idol as if he were an image of stone."—*Hare.*

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feet in depth. Where it is widest the bottom is mud; where narrowest, rock or sand."

the waters of Jordan return

14—18. (14) **magnified,** Jos. iii. 7. This a Divine testimony to his appointment to succeed Mos. (15, 16) **command the priests,** indic. Jos.' supreme authority. He acted under immediate Div. direction. **testimony,**[a] sometimes covenant. (17) **out of Jordan,** on to the western bank. (18) **flowed . . . banks,** not flowed over as a flood, but filled all its banks full.

The river and the roadway (*v.* 18).—I. Who, looking at that river, would have suspected a host had passed over its bed? II. The world full of scenes where nature holds on her way unmindful of great events—the cornfields of Waterloo, the waves at Trafalgar. III. The events leave their mark elsewhere.

True greatness.—

Who are the great?
Those who have boldly ventured to explore
Unsounded seas, and lands unknown before—
Soar'd on the wings of science, wide and far,
Measured the sun, and weighed each distant star—
Pierced the dark depths of ocean and of earth,
And brought uncounted wonders into birth—
Repell'd the pestilence, restrain'd the storm,
And given new beauty to the human form.
Waken'd the voice of reason and unfurl'd
The page of truthful knowledge to the world;
They who have toil'd and studied for mankind—
Aroused the slumbering virtues of the mind—
Taught us a thousand blessings to create:—
These are the nobly great.[b]

a Ex. xxv. 16.

"In our fields abundance of wet breeds abundance of weeds, and, consequently, great scarcity of corn. And is it not so with our souls? The more of God's blessings and wealth, the more weeds of carnality and vanity; and the more rich to the world, the less righteous to God commonly."—*Spencer.*

"What millions died that Cæsar might be great."—*Campbell.*

b *Prince.*

the memorial set up at Gilgal

19—24. (19) **first month,** Nisan. **Gilgal,** the place so named afterwards.[a] It continued long a place of rendezvous, and perhaps a sanctuary.[b] It was some five miles fr. the river. (20) **pitch,** set up, to form a heap, or rude pillar. (21) See *v.* 6. (22, 23) Comp. Ex. xiv. 21. (24) Two objects were to be served by this monument—it was a testimony to surrounding heathen, and a memorial to God's people.

The passage of Jordan commemorated (*vv.* 20—24).—Notice—I. The mercy commemorated: the passage of Jordan. II. The means used to perpetuate the remembrance of it: two monuments were erected. These were to serve—1. As evidences of God's power. Who can ever oppose Him with success? Who can ever fail that trusteth in Him? 2. As memorials of love. We see what we may expect in the time of trouble, and in the hour of death, from God. Improvement:—Let us—(1) Remember God's mercies to us; (2) Transmit the knowledge of His goodness to the latest generations.[c]

Public monuments.—It has been common in all times, and among all people, who make any pretences to civilisation, to signalise great events by the erection of public monuments. The word monument, from *monco*, to remind, is suggestive of their purpose. Such were the triumphal arches of the Romans (as of Titus, A.D. 80: of Trajan, 114; and of Constantine, 321—of which the marble arch in Hyde Park is a model); and the obelisks, pillars, often found in ancient cities. Among the best known is the monument of London, the loftiest isolated column

a Jos. v. 9, 10.

b Ju. ii. 1, iii. 19; 1 Sa. vii. 16, x. 8, xi. 14, 15, xiii. 4, 7, 8, 12, 15, xv. 12, 21.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

If the Gospel does not bid you despair, never do you despair of yourself.

"Monuments are the grappling irons that bind one generation to another."—*Joubert.*

"Those only deserve a monument who do not need one, that is, who have raised themselves a monument in the minds and memories of men."—*Massillon.*

in the world (202 feet high, cost £14,500), erected to commemorate the great fire of London in 1666. The scenes of great battles, too, as Waterloo, are often indicated by monuments of various kinds. But whereas their erection has been usually instigated by a variety of human passions, as pride, etc., to commemorate human exploits, this was erected by express command of God for purposes of instruction, warning, and encouragement.

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"Monuments themselves memorials need."—*Crabbe.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—3. (1) **Amorites,** chief of the nations dwelling in hill country of Judea. **Canaanites,** chief of those dwelling on coast and low lands.[a] **heart melted,** prob. the difficulty of such a host crossing Jordan had been one of their confidences. Such fear is ever the beginning of misfortune. (2) **that time,** immediately on taking possess. of their land. **sharp knives,** made of flint. Such knives appear to have been long used for circumcision, and sacred purposes. **again,** not on those already done, but a general circum. to insure all should bear mark of God's people. (3) **hill,** *etc., i.e.* where foreskins were buried.

A national panic (*v.* 1).—**I.** The cause of this panic. "They heard." 1. The people of the region must have witnessed the event; and, filled with wonder, have spread the report of it; 2. Those who heard must have regarded this miracle as evidence of a present God; and, therefore, as the prelude of certain victory. II. The effects of the panic. 1. Their heart melted with fear. They would feel that no resistance would ultimately avail. The moral effect would favour the Israelites; 2. The panic-stricken people would give Israel time for the first duty of the priests (*vv.* 2—4).

The tide retarded.—"In the number of Providential interpositions in answer to prayer," says Le Clerc, "may be placed what happened on the coast of Holland in the year 1672. The Dutch expected an attack from their enemies by sea, and public prayers were ordered for their deliverance. It came to pass, that when their enemies waited for the tide, in order to land, the tide was retarded, contrary to its usual course, for twelve hours; so that their enemies were obliged to defer the attempt to another opportunity, which they never found, because a storm arose afterwards, and drove them from the coast."

4—9. (4) **cause,** or occasion necessitating a general circum. (5) **born in the wilderness,** their varied movements would lead to neglect.[a] (6) **walked,** sojourned, moving to and fro. (7) **by the way,** or while journeying thro' desert. (8) **whole,** the wounds made in the process had healed up. The panic of the Canaanites prevented any attack during this period. (9) **reproach of Egypt,** either taunts uttered by Egyp. on hearing of their sins and sufferings in wilderness:[b] or more prob. ref. is to the degradation of bondage in Egypt, when they were without a country, and slaves. **Gilgal,** Jos. iv. 19.

Israel's first proceedings in Canaan (*vv.* 8—10).—Consider—**I.** The conduct of Joshua on his entrance into Canaan: directly opposite to what we should have supposed. II. How far is it proper for our imitation at this day? We may learn from it that, in whatever circumstances we be—1. Religion should be our first

the circumcision at Gilgal

a Nu. xiii. 29.

"Clemency is a virtue by which God so attempers the chastisements and punishments of the creature, even at the very time when He inflicts them, that by their weight and continuance they may not equal the magnitude of the sins committed; indeed, that they may not exceed the strength of the creature."—*Aymilius.*

"Prayer is a supernatural work, and therefore the principle of it must be supernatural. He that hath nothing of the Spirit of God cannot pray at all: he may howl as a beast in his necessity or distress, or may speak words of prayer; but pray he cannot."—*Leighton.*

the reproach of Egypt rolled away

a "Generally thought the true cause was a temporary suspension of the covenant with the unbelieving race who, being rejected of the Lord, were doomed to perish in the wilderness, and whose children had to

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bear the iniquity of their fathers."—*Jamieson.*

b The taunts industriously cast by that people upon Is. as *nationally* rejected by God by the cessation of circumcision."—*Keil.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Beecher.

first passover in Canaan

manna ceases

a Gesenius. See time of *barley* harvest.

b Le. xxiii. 10, 11, 14.

c Le. xvi. 35.

If you have but a grain of grace, it is infinitely more valuable than all your other possessions: just as a small diamond exceeds in worth a mountain of dross.

d Marryat.

the captain of the Lord's host

a Ge. xii. 7, xvlii. 2.

b Ge. xxxii. 24.

c Phil. ii. 7, 8.

d Comp. Nu. xxii. 31.

e "The armed people of Is. are never called 'the host of the Lord,' though once spoken of in Ex. xii. 41, as 'all the hosts of the

concern; 2. We should place the most implicit confidence in God; 3. We should be determined, through grace, to "roll away the reproach" of our unconverted state.*c*

Blotting out the past.—Ah! how blessed are they that know how to shut the door of the past, and not open it again—for when we have shut it we usually have had enough of the hours that we have passed through, and we had better write upon them, "Forgetting the things that are behind," unless it be some fairer joy, unless it be some better hope, that we fain would cherish. The mistakes, the sorrows, the weaknesses, the temptations, the defeats of past hours—let them go with the hours. Let us not turn back to find them.*d*

10—12. (10) **fourteenth day, of Nisam,** Ex. xii. 6—18. (11) **old corn,** more correctly *produce*, deriv. of word*a* indicates reference to the fruits of the land just then ready for reaping. Another sug. is (Mat. Henry) that the inhabitants of country fled before them, leaving old corn in their storehouses. **morrow,** not after *even* of *v.* 10, but after day of holy convocation, so the 16th. **unleavened cakes,** as used for passover. **parched,***b* the grains roasted without other preparation. (12) **manna ceased,***c* bec. necessity for it was no longer felt.

The food of the wilderness exchanged for the fruits of Canaan.—I. For forty years one kind, now a rich variety. II. For forty years a sweet food, now diversity of flavour. III. For forty years a measured supply, now a boundless store of choice provisions. Apply:—Here we have daily bread for the body, and portions of truth for the mind: hereafter a banquet in the heavenly Canaan.

Past and future.—The world has arrived at a period which renders it the part of fashion to pay homage to the prospective precedents of the future, in preference to those of the past. The past is dead, and has no resurrection; but the future is endowed with such a life, that it lives to us even in anticipation. The past is, in many things, the foe of mankind; the future is, in all things, our friend. For the past has no hope; the future is both hope and fruition. The past is the text-book of tyrants; the future the Bible of the free. Those who are solely governed by the past, stand, like Lot's wife, crystallised in the act of looking backward, and for ever incapable of looking forward.*d*

13—15. (13) **by Jericho,** Jos. had advanced near to examine city, and plan his attack. **a man,** see Div. manifest. to Ab.,*a* and Jacob;*b* God's appearing in the *form of man* was anticipative of the Incarnation.*c* **sword drawn,** attitude of prep. for war.*d* (14) **captain,** Heb. *prince*, with idea of leader. **host of the Lord,***e* prob. ref. here is to angels, and is the assurance of mirac. help in overcoming Jericho. Comp. Ge. xxxii. 1, 2. **did worship,** as to one claiming respect, not as to God. (15) Jos. needed a deeper sense of the dignity of his visitor: he must feel the hallowing of Div. presence. Comp. Ex. iii. 5.

Captain of the Lord's host.—Let us view the narrative before us as—I. Describing an anticipatory appearance of Christ. II. Foreshadowing a peculiar relation that subsists between Christ and His followers. See—1. The fact of this relation. (1) They are the Lord's host: the Church is a host on account of its numbers, its unity, and its order; (2) Of this host, Christ is the

Captain: He is Captain by sanction of law, by the suffrage of the army, and through all time; 2. The consequences of this relation. As Captain of the Lord's host Christ—(1) Summons His people to a life of warfare; (2) Requires unquestioning obedience to His authority; (3) Furnishes His soldiers with power for their warfare—the power of His spirit, of His truth, and of His love; (4) He leads us to an enterprise that must end in glory—glory to His own name, and glory to each individual engaged upon His side.[f]

The captain of the Lord's host.—The march was over. The Jordan had been forded. Up, through the long steep jungle at the river's edge, the tribes had shorn their way and were now at last fairly encamped in Canaan. To their eyes, still aching with the glare of the desert, the scene that now opened was one of enchanting freshness and glory—

> It was a scene divine,
> A blending of all beauties, streams and dells,
> Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine.

But their warfare was not yet accomplished; not yet were they to enter into rest. . . . Right in the middle of their path, five miles onward, towering above the palm-groves, rose in its massive strength the fortified city of Jericho. It was the key of the country, and before they could open the country to take possession of the heritage their God had given them they had to take that key. . . . How was this to be done? . . . . We may be sure that this hour of pause was to their leader an hour of prayer. . . . In this mood he went forward alone to reconnoitre the place. While he was there thinking and thinking, all at once there glimmered in the twilight over against him the figure of "a man with a drawn sword in his hand."[g]

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Lord.'"—*Spk. Comm.*

See *A Serm.*, by *Bp. Builkeley*; also, *R. Hall, M.A., Wks.* v. 248, and *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 293.

[f] *C. Stanford.*

"The more powerful the obstacle, the more glory we have in overcoming it; and the difficulties with which we are met are the maids of honour which set off virtue."—*Moliere.*

"Wisdom is not found with those who dwell at their ease; rather nature, when she adds brain, adds difficulty."—*Emerson.*

[g] *C. Stanford.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

the siege of Jericho

1—5. (1) straitly, strictly; lit. *had shut (its gates) and was fast shut.* A fenced city with high walls, De. i. 28. (2) **given . . hand,** that which God foreordains may be spoken of as accomplished. **king,** even small cities had one: monarchy the only form of government then known. (3) **compass,** march round. (4) **trumpets,** lit. *of Jobel*, Le. xxv. 9. **seven,** this number regarded as symbol of the covenant.[a] **shout,** "the well-known and terrible war-cry" peculiar to Israel.[b] **flat,** marg. *under it, i.e.* the shout.

The siege of Jericho (*v.* 3).—It seemed good to Infinite Wisdom to appoint this method of besieging the city. I. To magnify His power, and show in a convincing manner, both to the Canaanites and to Israel, that Omnipotence alone had achieved the work. II. To try the faith and obedience of Joshua and the people by proscribing a course of conduct that seemed to human wisdom the height of folly. III. To put honour upon the ark as the appointed token of His presence, and to confirm still more fully that veneration and awe with which they had always been taught to regard it.[c]

Esteeming our religious teachers for their works' sake.—Because they are like lamps, which consume themselves to give light to

[a] "Seven is the signature of God's covenant with men. . . . As to the reason of this, 3 is the signature of God, in the ever-blessed Trinity; 4 of the world, *e.g.*, 4 elements, 4 seasons, etc. Seven being thus made up of 3 and 4 is appropriate signature of the covenant."—*Trench.*

[b] *Stanley.* Comp. Ju. vii. 18, 20.

[c] *Rev. G. Bush.*

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See *Bp. Hall, Contemp. Siege of Jericho.*

vv. 1—3. *Bp. Jewel, Wks.* ii. 963.

[d] *H. Smith.*

the city compassed

[a] *Wordsworth.*

[b] Nu. x. 25.

"Out of all earthly things there cometh out good and evil: the good through God, and the evil from the evil heart."—*Coleridge.*

"Earthly greatness is a nice thing, and requires so much chariness in the managing as the contentment of it cannot requite."—*Hall.*

"Faith is nothing else but the soul's venture. It ventures *to* Christ, in opposition to all legal terrors. It ventures *upon* Christ in opposition to our guiltiness. It ventures *for* Christ, in opposition to all difficulties and discouragements."—*W. Bridge.*

[c] *D'Aubigne.*

the compassing of the city repeated seven times

[a] "A shout for mastery, a shout of faith, and a shout of prayer."—*Matt. Henry.*

v. 16. *C. Bradley, Prac. Serms.* ii. 59.

others, so they consume themselves to give light to you; because they are like the hen, which clucketh her chickens together from the kite, so they cluck you together from the serpent: because they are like the shout which did beat down the walls of Jericho, so they beat down the walls of sin; because they are like the fiery pillar which went before the Israelites to the land of promise, so they go before you to the land of promise; because they are like good Andrew, which called his brother to see the Messias, so they call upon you to see the Messias; and, therefore, make much of such.[d]

6—11. (6) *See v.* 4. (7) **he said,** Heb. *they* said, the officers receiving Jos.' instructions. **him that is armed,** the two and a half tribes, Jos. i. 14;[a] or more prob. the general army. (8) **blew,** not continuously, but at intervals, deafening and alarming blasts. (9) **rereward,** as is usual in marching order, a few soldiers guarded the rear: this prob. the place of the tribe of Dan.[b] (10) Two sets of people watched, those of Jer., and those of Is.; the scene was to teach them both, but very different lessons. (11) **once,** the work of, at most, a few hours.

Working and waiting.—The conquest of Jericho a great victory of faith, Heb. xi. 30. We may learn—I. That faith will adopt the means appointed of God, even though science and custom may reject them as ill-adapted, or unusual. II. That faith will not only use the means appointed of God but in the way prescribed by Him. III. The town of Mansoul to be taken in the Lord's name by the "foolishness of preaching." IV. When the Gospel trumpet is blown as God directs, only He can make the walls of sin, and pride, and obstinate resistance fall down.

The courage of faith.—As Luther drew near the door which was about to admit him into the presence of his judges (the Diet of Worms), he met a valiant knight, the celebrated George of Freundsberg, who four years later, at the head of his German lansquenets, bent the knee with his soldiers on the field of Pavia, and then, charging to the left of the French army, drove it into the Ticino, and in a great measure decided the captivity of the king of France. The old general, seeing Luther pass, tapped him on the shoulder, and shaking his head, blanched in many battles, said kindly, "Poor monk, poor monk! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captains have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee." A noble tribute of respect paid by the courage of the sword to the courage of the mind.[c]

12—16. (12) **early,** before the heat of the day. (13) Comp. *vv.* 4, 5, 8, 9. (14) **six days,** completing the week. (15) **seventh day,** most prob. a Sabbath. **dawning,** very early, to gain time for the seven marches. This arrangement tested the faith of the people by delaying expected result: and it occupied the time until the Sab. day closed at even. (16) **shout,**[a] the cry of such a multitude must have been most impressive.

Week-day obedience and Sabbath blessing (*v.* 15).—I. Here was a Sabbath preceded by a week of obedience. II. Here was a Sabbath marked by extraordinary effort: crowning and rendering effectual the preceding toil. III. Here was Sabbath work, ren-

dering the whole duty complete and securing the blessing of God. Learn—Week-day obedience and fidelity to duty a preparation for Sabbath blessing.

God's share of the spoils of war.—I speak not this, because I think nothing at all may be left to any special purpose; for even in Jericho, where was made a general destruction, God Himself commanded that all silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, should be saved, and not saved only, but be brought into the Lord's treasury. Howbeit, the things that may be reserved must not be dust, or chaff, or hay, or stubble; but gold and silver, and iron and brass—I mean they may not be things meet to furnish and maintain superstition, but such things as be strong, and may serve either directly to serve God, or else for comeliness and good order. Such things may be reserved, notwithstanding they come out of the spoil of Jericho.[b]

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"When we have Bible conversations our lives, as rich diamonds, cast a sparkling lustre in the Church of God, and are, in some sense, parallel with the life of Christ, as the transcript with the original."—*T. Watson.*

b Bp. Jewel.

17—21. (17) **accursed,** marg. *devoted,* see idea illus. in Le. xxvii. 28, 29. Jericho was to be regarded as kind of first-fruits of their victory, and so must be devoted wholly to God. See the principle of the Mos. system.[a] (18) **keep . . thing,** usually they were allowed to take spoil of captured cities. As devoted to God, it would be sacrilege to touch any of this. **a curse,** bring it under a curse.[b] (19) Reference to gold, etc., indic. wealth of city. (20) **wall fell down,**[c] in crushing of inhab., and consequent panic, Is. could rush in and take possession. (21) **all,** to make Jericho one great sacrifice.

Jericho taken

a Ex. xxxiv. 19, 20.

b De. vii. 26.

c "It may be that the means were found in the resources of the natural agencies of earthquake, or volcanic convulsion, wh. mark the whole of the Jordan valley, fr. Gennesareth down to the Dead Sea."—*Stanley.*

The taking of Jericho (*vv.* 20, 21).—We shall notice—I. The preparations for the siege. The people—1. Renew the ordinance of circumcision; 2. Keep the feast of the passover. II. The fall of the city. The manner of its taking both surprising and instructive. III. The destruction of the inhabitants. Learn—(1) The excellence of faith; 2. The benefit of enlisting under the banners of Christ.[d]

Engines of war.—Sir Thomas Urquhart tells us that John Napier the father of the first lord, and inventor of the logarithms, had invented a destroying engine that would clear a space a mile in extent each way of the enemy; in other words, of thirty thousand Turks, without the loss of a Christian. But on being requested, in his last illness to reveal the contrivance, he replied, "That if he could lessen the means already existing for the destruction of man, he would with all his might apply himself to the purpose; but that they should never by his means be increased." He died in 1617.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 20. *J. Saurin,* iii. 20; *R. P. Buddicom,* ii. 328; *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 306.

22—25. (22) **had said,** giving beforehand special instructions. (23) Though her house was on the town wall, it had not fallen with the rest. **without the camp,** outside it; their presence, as heathen, would pollute it. (24) **only the silver,** *etc.*, things indestructible by fire. (25) **dwelleth in Is.,** being admitted as proselyte. She became an ancestor of Messiah.[a] **unto this day,** Jos. iv. 9.

Rahab spared

a Matt. i. 5.

Old friends in a new character (*v.* 23).—I. Contrast the former with the present visit of these men. II. Consider some of the lessons taught by this history. 1. The reward of kindness; 2. Faithfulness in performance of a promise; 3. Divine recognition of faith. Heb. xi. 31.

Illustration of humanity.—In the year 1746, when the English

"The loss of a friend often afflicts no less by the momentary shock than when it is brought back to our minds some time afterwards by the sight of some object associated with him in the memory; of some-

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thing which reminds us that we have laughed together, or shed tears together, that our hearts have trembled under the same breeze of gladness, or that we have bowed our heads under the same stroke of sorrow."—*Grant.* "How good God is, and condescending to our littlenesses and infirmities! I am persuaded we cannot too much treat Him as a Friend, and the more we do so, the greater will be our reverence as well as our intimacy."

Joshua's fame is noised about

a Lat. *ad, jurare*, to swear, so meaning to entreat earnestly, as if under oath. "The words of the oath have in the orig. a rhythmical character, wh. would tend to keep them on the lips and in the memory of the people."—*Spk. Comm.*

b 1 Ki. xvi. 34.

c 26. *R. Sibbs, D.D.*, vii. 17; *Dr. T. Manton Wks.* iv. pt. 2. 793.

d R. Sibbes. The celebrated Linnæus always testified in his conversation, writings, and actions, the greatest sense of God's omniscience. He placed over the door of the hall in which he gave his lectures, "*Innocui vivite! Numen adest*"—Live guiltless, God observes you.

d Dr. Kitto.

were engaged in war with Spain, the *Elizabeth*, of London, Captain William Edwards, coming through the gulf from Jamaica, richly laden, met with a most violent storm, in which the ship sprung a leak, that obliged them to run into the Havanna, a Spanish port. The captain went on shore, and directly waited on the governor; told the occasion of his putting in, and that he surrendered the ship as a prize, and himself, with his men, as prisoners of war, only requesting good quarter. "No, sir," replied the Spanish governor; "if we had taken you in fair war at sea, or approaching our coast with hostile intentions, your ship would then have been a prize, and your people prisoners; but when, distressed by a tempest, you come into our ports for the safety of your lives, we, being men, are bound as such, by the laws of humanity, to afford relief to distressed men who ask it of us. We cannot, even against our enemies, take advantage of an act of God: you have leave, therefore, to unload your ship, if that be necessary to stop the leak; you may refit her here, and traffic so far as shall be necessary to pay the charges; you may then depart; and I will give you a pass to be in force till you are beyond Bermuda. If after that you are taken, you will then be a lawful prize · but now you are only a stranger, and have a stranger's right to safety and protection." The ship accordingly departed, and arrived safe in London.

26, 27. (26) **adjured,**[a] imposed on the people an oath. This destruct. was to be a permanent memorial of God's abhorrence of idolatry; and a reminder that all the land was God's, and that this they had acknowledged by giving Him wholly the first city that was taken. Poss. the curse was levelled against the fortifications, rather than the mere site. Comp. Jos. xviii. 21; Ju. iii. 13; 2 Sa. x. 5. **shall lay,** *etc.*, his eldest son shall die when he begins, his youngest when he finishes.[b] (27) **noised,** spread.

The unprosperous builder.—Consider—I. The cause of the curse here pronounced: "that riseth and builds this city Jericho." Why would God not have Jericho built again? Because—1. He would have it a perpetual remembrance of His goodness and merciful dealing with His people, passing over Jordan, and coming freshly into Canaan; 2. It was dedicated to God as the firstfruits; 3. He wished it to be a terror to the rest of the inhabitants; 4. It might be a means to draw others to come in to God's people to join with them, and submit, and prevent their destruction. II. The specification of the curse, wherein it stands: "he shall lay," etc. 1. God hath the supreme power of life and death; 2. Children are part of their parents; 3. These children would probably imitate their father in ill.[c]

Razed cities.—This course, of making a monument of a conquered and destroyed city or building by solemnly interdicting the restoration thereof, has not a few parallels in ancient history. Thus the Romans made a decree full of execration against any who should dare at any future time to rebuild Carthage, which had been their rival in empire, and the situation of which was so advantageous as to create the fear that it might be restored. Similar imprecations were pronounced by Agamemnon against such as should rebuild Troy, and by Greece against those who should restore Sidene, "according to ancient custom," says Strabo, by whom the fact is recorded.[d]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

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1—5. (1) **trespass**, or acted treacherously. **in**, or in regard to, the thing dedicated to God. **Achan**, *troubler*, spelt also Achar.[a] **Carmi**, **Zabdi**, 1 Chr. ii. 6. **Zerah**, Ge. xxxviii. 29, 30, the genealogy here given is not complete, some names omitted. **took**, for his own use: the sin of sacrilege. (2) **Ai**, also *Hai*,[b] Aija,[c] Aiath,[d] oss. the modern Tell-el-hajar, two miles E.S.E. fr. Bethel.[e] **Bethaven**, Jos. xviii. 12; Ho. iv. 15, v. 8. x. 5. **Bethel**, the ancient *Luz*. Ge. xxviii. 19, modern *Beitau*, or *Beitin*. (3) **but few**, pop. about 12,000.[f] (4) **went up**, indic. hilly situation of Ai. (5) **Shebarim**, breakings; the openings of the passes; or the stone quarries. **going down**, marg. *in Morad*, the steep declivity of the wady.

Achan's sin; and defeat of Israel before Ai

a 1 Chr. ii. 7.
b Ge. xii. 8, xiii. 3.
c Ne. xi. 31.
d Is. x. 28.
e "The precise position of *Ai* is unknown, but this verse points out its prob. site in the wild entanglement of hill and valley at the head of the ravines running up fr. the valley of the Jordan."—*Stanley.*
f Jos. viii. 25.

Israel's defeat at Ai (*v.* 5).—The effect of this defeat would naturally be—I. To serve as an evidence of God's displeasure, and a solemn call upon the people to humble themselves under His mighty hand, and institute a rigid self-examination to discover, if possible, the cause of so sad a reverse. II. To harden the Canaanites, and make them more secure than ever in their sins. Thus their ruin, when it came, would be the more dreadful.[g]

The tyranny of sin.—Tyranny is always obnoxious to its victim. But you would feel it to be the worst of all tyranny, to be all but intolerable, if your tyrant resided constantly in your own family circle, obtruding his hateful surveillance, his despotic interference, into your most secret hours of retirement. But here, surely, is a worse tyranny still; when the tyrant follows you, not merely to your home, to the domestic circle, to the closet, but penetrates your own breast, and resides perpetually within your own bosom. And yet how certain it is that a pampered appetite, an ungovernable passion, does wield such a tyrannous sway over the soul! Is it not the case? May we not say to such a one, that conscience, duty, sense of right, that in you which ought to rule your being, has been enervated and enfeebled, and bereft of all power to govern your conduct? Have not a fierce democracy of lusts and passions driven conscience from its throne within your breast? Do you not feel that they, and not you, are the masters? That when temptation comes in its strength, though you see what is right, you cannot resist it? Over your own thoughts and desires, your own will and working, is it not so that often you have no more command than the sea over its waters, or forest trees over their motions, as they bend to the blast?[h]

g *C. Bush.* "When once a man has involved himself deeply in guilt he has no safe ground to stand upon. Everything is unsound and rotten under his feet. The crimes he has already committed may have an unseen connection with others, of which he has not the slightest suspicion; and he may be hurried, when he least intends it, into enormities of which he once thought himself utterly incapable."—*Bishop Porteus.*
h *Dr. Caird.*

6—9. (6) **rent**, *etc.*, usual signs of grief and alarm, Le. x. 6; Job ii. 12; Joel ii. 12, 13. (7) In this lang. there is intensity of feeling, but no intended reproach of God. (8) **backs**, lit. *necks*. (9) **environ**,[a] surround, encircle. **thy great name**, wh. is pledged to establish the people in the land.[b]

Joshua's prayer

a From Fr. *environ*, fr. *viron*, a circle.
b Ex. xxxii. 12; Nu. xiv. 15, 16; De. xxxii. 26, 27; Eze. xxxvi. 22, 23.

Israel discomfited by the men of Ai (*v.* 8).—I. The discomfiture of Israel. Their mode of proceeding to the attack of Ai was far from right; but their discomfiture was owing to another cause. II. Joshua's distress. 1. His conduct on this occasion was by no means unexceptional—(1) The manner in which he complained to God; (2) His distrust of God; 2. Yet on the whole there was

c *C. Simeon, M.A.* "The slave who digs in the mine or labours at the

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oar, can rejoice at the prospect of laying down his burden together with his life; but to the slave of guilt there arises no hope from death. On the contrary, he is obliged to look forward with constant terror to this most certain of all events as the conclusion of all his hopes, and the commencement of his greatest miseries."—*Blair.*

much in it to be admired—(1) The concern he expressed for the loss of life; (2) His humiliation before God; (3) His tender regard for God's honour.[c]

Sin a trouble.—Sin is always a trouble, though in many different ways. A robber bribed an unscrupulous lawyer to plead his cause, promising him a thousand crowns. The suit having been gained, the law-breaker brought the money. Supper followed, and the night being stormy, the guest was invited to lodge there. In the middle of the night he found his way to the advocate's room, bound and gagged him, repocketed his thousand crowns, broke open a chest, and bidding the helpless host good night, marched off with goodly spoil.—*Tyranny of sin.*—When sin is let in as a suppliant it remains as a tyrant. The Arabs have a fable of a miller who was one day startled by a camel's nose thrust in at the window of the room where he was sleeping. "It is very cold outside," said the camel, "I only want to get my nose in." The nose was let in, then the neck, and finally the whole body. Presently the miller began to be extremely inconvenienced at the ungainly companion he had obtained in a room certainly not large enough to hold both. "If you are inconvenienced, you may leave," said the camel; "as for myself, I shall stay where I am."

God's answer to Joshua

10—15. (10) **get thee up,** tone of reproof. It was time for searching out people's sin, not for suspecting Div. faithfulness. (11) Obs. how the aggravations of the sin are dwelt on. (12) **they were accursed,** as threatened, Jos. vi. 18. (13) **sanctify,** by clearing them fr. this guilt, and guilty one. (14) **Lord taketh,** most prob. by lot.[a] (15) **burnt,** after stoning, *v.* 25. *See* Le. xx. 14. **wrought folly,**[b] or wickedness, wh. in view of its conseq. is also foolishness.

Get thee up (*v.* 10).—Address these words to—I. The doubter, depressed and paralysed by his doubts. II. Those who have fainted under the struggles of life. III. Those who have gone back; who have spiritually declined. IV. Those who are hindered and disheartened in their godly enterprises. Learn:—(1) It is God who speaks to us, and says, "Get thee up;" (2) He speaks thus to our will and to our hearts.[c]

Temporal evils of sin.—It is the Trojan horse—it hath sword, and famine, and pestilence in the belly of it. Sin is a coal, that not only blacks but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries relations. Sin shoots the flying roll of God's curses into a family and kingdom (Zech v. 4). It is reported of Phocas, having built a wall of mighty strength about his city, there was a voice heard, "Sin is in the city, and that will throw down the wall."[d]—*Classes of sins.*—There are two classes of sins. There are some sins by which man crushes, wounds, malevolently injures his brother; those sins which speak of a bad, tyrannical, and selfish heart. . . . There are other sins by which a man injures himself. There is a life of reckless indulgence; there is a career of yielding to ungovernable propensities, which most surely conducts to wretchedness and ruin, but makes a man an object of compassion rather than of condemnation.[e]

Achan's discovery and confession

16—21. (16) **early,** to show earnestness and zeal. (17) **took,** according to sign given by the lot. (18) **man by man,** putting

a "Heb. word for lot (*góral*, derived fr. *goor*, or *garar*, to roll) suggests that small stones, prob. white and black ones, were used. These were prob. drawn fr. a chest." — *Spk. Comm.*

b Ge. xxxiv. 7; Do. xxii. 21.

v. 12. *Dr. J. Edwards, Serms.* 192.

v. 13. *T. Pyle, M.A.*, iii. 185; *J. Downes*, i. 221.

c *S. Martin.*

"A notion prevailed among the Jews that detection of a criminal was performed by observing the shinings of the stones in the high priest's breastplate."—*H. W. Phillott*, in *Smith's Dict.*

d *T. Watson.*

e *F. W. Robertson.*

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one after another under the test. (19) **give glory,** *etc.*, declare the truth, whatever it may cost thee. Comp. express. as used Jno. ix. 24. (20) **indeed I have sinned,** this earnest way of speaking we may hope showed true repentance. (21) **Bab. garment,** lit. *robe of Shinar;* the long robe usually worn by kings. **shekel,** Ge. xxiii. 15, 16. **wedge,** bar in the shape of a tongue. **midst,** middle; this could hardly be done without knowledge and participation of his family.

Achan's guilt and punishment (*vv.* 19, 20).—Consider—I. His guilt. It was proved from—1. Unquestionable testimony; 2. Personal confession; 3. Corroborating facts. II. His punishment. 1. The sentence, though dreadful, was not too severe. To see this, look at the sin—(1) In itself; (2) Its circumstances; (3) Its effects. 2. The execution of it was calculated to produce the best effects. Behold in this history—(1) The deceitfulness of sin; (2) The certainty of its exposure; (3) The awfulness of its award.

The danger of avarice.—A servant of an Indian rajah was ordered to keep away from a cave near the rajah's residence, and to keep all others away. The servant began to consider the probable reason of his having been forbidden to enter the cave. He made up his mind that his master must have great treasure hid there, and resolved to get it. Taking a fellow-servant with him to secure the coveted prize, they rolled away the stone at the mouth of the cave, when a tremendous tiger sprang upon them and tore them to pieces.

22–26. (22) **ran,** a sign of eager interest the people felt. (23) **laid . . Lord,** as a token of their belonging to Him; and as indic. the discovery of the sin. Prob. presented at door of tabernacle. (24) **and all Israel,** the clearance was to be as national as had been the sin. **valley of Achor,** *trouble*, now Wady-el-Kelt.[a] **sons and daughters,** as after accomplices. Some suggest they were taken to be solemn spectators, not to share his fate: but *see* Jos. xxii. 20. (26) **heap of stones,** making at once a grave,[b] and a pillar of memorial.

The troubles of sin (*v.* 25).—We will show from this text—I. That sin is a very troublesome thing. Consider—1. The load of guilt by which it oppresses us; 2. The subterfuges resorted to to conceal our sins; 3. Its corrupt and restless influences on the tempers and dispositions. II. That however artfully concealed, sin must be exposed. 1. The most secret sins are often revealed in this world; 2. Those sins that escape detection here will be manifested in the last day. III. When the sinner is exposed, he is left without any reasonable excuse. IV. That punishment treads upon the heels of sin. 1. God has power to trouble sinners; 2. He will trouble them.[c]

Achan's punishment.—"Were the family and the cattle of Achan stoned?" "Were they burned with fire?" "If so, upon what ground did the sentence to that effect proceed?" etc. Dr. Adam Clarke is of opinion that Achan only was stoned, and that his substance was burned with fire; or that, if even his oxen, etc., were destroyed, yet his sons and daughters were left uninjured, and were brought out into the valley only that they might see and fear, and be for ever deterred by their father's punishment from imitating his example. The reason which the doctor assigns for this opinion is, that the children of Achan could not justly

v. 19. *Dr. M. Hole, Liturgy,* i. 75.

vv. 19–20. *Bp. Hall, Cont. Achan; J. Saurin*, iii. 78; *Bp. T. Wilson*, iv. 329.

vv. 19–21. *R. P. Buddicom*, ii. 350.

vv. 20, 21. *C. E. Kennaway, Serms. to Young*, 236.

v. 21. *R. Robinson, Vill. Serm.* 426.

c C. Simeon, M.A. "O cursed hunger of pernicious gold! what bands of faith can impious lucre hold!"—*Dryden.*

"Poverty wants some, luxury many, avarice all things."—*Cowley.*

Achan's punishment

a Ho. ii. 15.

b Jos. viii. 29; 2 Sa. xviii. 17.

c Beta.

"They who once engage in iniquitous designs, miserably deceive themselves when they think that they will go so far and no further; one fault begets another, one crime renders another necessary; and thus they are impelled continually downward into a depth of guilt which, at the commencement of their career, they would have died rather than have incurred."—*Southey.*

"Avarice isolates man from the great universe and the holy God, deadens the

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sensibilities to the highest joys, and shuts the soul up in its own dark self, the victim of a thousand miserable suspicions, and the subject of attributes that every generous heart must loathe."—*Dr. Thomas.*

d Carpenter.

suffer with him, because of the law, Deut. xxiv. 16, unless they had been accomplices in his guilt, of which, as he suggests, there is no evidence. The learned editor of Calmet acquiesces in this opinion, and gives the following as the probable sense of the passage:—"They stoned HIM [Achan] with stones, and burned THEM [his property] with fire, and [rather OR] stoned them with stones; that is, making a distinction in guilt between his property and the things stolen; and raised over HIM [Achan] a heap of stones." In justification of this interpretation of the passage, he suggests that, had his family been stoned, the heap of stones would have included THEM also, whereas it was raised over HIM; and that the burning was probably applied to such things as might suffer by burning, and the stoning to what the fire might have had little or no effect on.[d]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

the attack on Ai renewed

1—3. (1) **fear not,** a needed rebuke, as Jos. was much dispirited by the failure. **all the people,** *i.e.* the soldiers; all were now necess. bec. fear had weakened the army. (2) **ambush,** stratagem was to be used. In all ages such tactics are considered fair in war. God now intended to show how His blessing would rest on hum. instrumentalities. (3) **thirty thousand,** comp. *v.* 12. Either there is a mistake in the number given in *v.* 3,[a] or the 5,000 were sent, out of the 30,000, to take position nearer the city,[b] or the 5,000 were sent to reinforce the 30,000 the day after they had taken position.[c]

Learning from experience.—I. This the second attack upon Ai; let us compare it with the former. 1. Then self-confident, now cautious; 2. Then self-prompted, now Divinely guided. II. Apply the lessons to the conflicts of life. 1. If we have suffered defeat, inquire into the cause; 2. Not sit down in inactivity or despair, but wisely prepare for a better attack.

Moral and physical courage.—We all understand the general difference between physical and moral courage; the one belonging rather to the bodily temperament, the other to the mind—the one to the animal, the other to the man; physical courage opposing itself to dangers which threaten the person or the life; moral courage the opposite of weakness, and proof against ridicule, false shame, the fashion of the day. And we know they may be united—as they were, for example, pre-eminently combined in that great man (Duke of Wellington) whose loss we are now deploring:—or they may be separated, as for instance, when Cranmer signed his recantation, and yet afterwards manifested at the stake the most unflinching fortitude. And it is often to be noted that those who abound in physical courage, never appalled by dangers, or even courting them, are deficient in moral courage, afraid of their companions, easily seduced to evil, shrinking before a laugh or a sneer.[d]

4—8. (4) **lie in wait,** hide behind the hill, or amid the trees and caves. **behind the city,** west of Ai, *v.* 9, a direction in wh. king of Ai expected no foes. (5) **approach,** by ordinary route. **flee,** so as to produce an excitement wh. would leave Ai defenceless. (6) **drawn,** Heb. *pulled,* by their anxiety to pursue fleeing Israel.[a] (7) **seize upon,** this would be easy as only

a Keil.
b Michaelis.
c Wordsworth.
v. 1. *J. H. Pott, Serms.* ii. 70. "I do not think a braver gentleman, more active-valiant, or more valiant-young, more daring, or more bold, is now alive to grace this latter age with noble deeds."—*Shakespeare.* "Courage enlarges, cowardice diminishes resources. In desperate straits the fears of the timid aggravate the dangers that imperil the brave. For cowards the road to destruction should be left open. They will carry over to the enemy nothing but their fears. The poltroon, like the scabbard, is an encumbrance when once the sword is drawn."—*Bovee*

d Dr. Hawkins.

the ambush about Ai

a Ju. xx. 29, 32. "Popular glory is a perfect coquette; her

wom. and childr. would be left in city. (8) **on fire,** for limitations of the destruction, *see v.* 2.

Readiness (*v.* 4).—Two great classes of men—the unready and the ready. The unready are those who are always taken by surprise let what will happen. The ready are those who have a certain alertness of mind: possess watchfulness and a spirit of forethought. The people of God should be always ready—I. For every good word—of comfort, reproof, warning, exhortation. II. For every good work—of teaching, toiling, fighting for the truth. III. For prayer. IV. This readiness should be general. "Be ye *all* ready."

A last opportunity.—On a wild coast of Britain, there are tall and craggy cliffs which overhang the ocean. The people residing near make their livelihood by gathering the eggs of the rock-birds. An iron is fixed in the cliff above: a rope is attached, and the adventurer lowers himself until he arrives at the ledge of the rock. Once a man found the rock to overhang so much, that he was obliged to swing himself to and fro, so as to gain his foothold on the rock. He succeeded; but in doing so he lost the rope from his grasp. The rope swung to and fro, its vibrations becoming less and less, and each time more and more distant. The man stood, and, quick as thought, reasoned thus with himself: "That rope is my only chance of life. In a little while it will be for ever beyond my reach. It is nearer now than it ever will be again. I must lay hold of it or die!" So saying, he sprang from the cliff as the rope was next approaching, caught it, and was safe!

9—13. (9) **abode,** *etc.*, settled in their hiding-place.[a] (10) **numbered,** in military sense, wh. includes marshalling in order for marching and battle. **went up,** fr. Gilgal to Ai is about 15 miles. (11) **a valley,** the deep chasm of the wady *El-Murogede.* (12) **took,** had taken, *see on v.* 3. (13) **midst of valley,** no doubt with a small body of men, who would seem to intend an attack like the previous one.[b]

The vigilant leader (*v.* 13).—These words may be applied to our Joshua—I. In relation to the history of the Church. In the night of spiritual darkness—the dark ages—He went through the midst of the valley; disposing His forces, preparing for the coming conflict. II. In relation to human experience. In the night of sorrow, humiliation, etc., death, Jesus is in the midst of the valley.

Washington on war.—Perhaps few facts would more forcibly illustrate the views, which even reflecting military men take of the nature of war, than the following:—Thomas Mullet, Esq., an English gentleman, being in America, called on General Washington, at his residence at Mount Vernon, soon after the close of the contest between that country and Great Britain. Washington asked him, in the course of conversation in his library, if he had met with an individual in that country who could write the history of the recent contest. Mr. M. replied that he knew of one, and only one, competent to the task. The general eagerly asked, "Who, sir, can he be?" Mr. M. replied, "Sir, Cæsar wrote his own Commentaries." The general bowed, and replied, "Cæsar could write his Commentaries; but, sir, I know the atrocities committed on both sides have been so great and many, that they cannot be faithfully recorded, and had better be buried in oblivion!"

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lovers must toil feel every inquietude, indulge every caprice, and perhaps at last be jilted into the bargain. True glory, on the other hand, resembles a woman of sense; her admirers must play no tricks; they feel no great anxiety, for they are sure in the end of being rewarded in proportion to their merit."—*Goldsmith.*

"If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly."—*Shakespeare.*

"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds."—*Bacon.*

the night march in the valley

a "Bethel, though lying quite near in direction of west by north, cannot be seen from *Tell-el-hajar*; two rocky heights rise between both places, just as the laying of an ambush to west of Ai would require."—*Robinson.*

b "The king of Ai, in the morning, would see neither the ambush in his rear, nor the host among the hills away to the north, on his left."—*Spk. Comm.*

"The warrior who cultivates his mind polishes his arms."—*De Bouffers.*

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the men of Ai pursue, leaving the city unguarded

a "The words, *or Bethel*, are not in the *Sept.*, and are rejected by some eminent scholars as an interpolation not found in the most ancient MSS."—*Jamieson.*

"Yet it may be more lofty courage dwells in one weak heart which braves an adverse fate, than his whose ardent soul indignant swells, warm'd by the fight, or cheer'd through high debate." — *Hon. Mrs. Norton.*

the men in ambush enter the city

"Prudent men lock up their motives, letting familiars have a key to their hearts as to their garden." — *Shenstone.*

"A commander must use pretty cheats: dark stratagems devise." — *Alleyn's Cressey.*

The Spartan mothers used to counsel their sons: "If your sword be too short, add a step to it."

the king of Ai taken, and Ai destroyed

a Ex. xvii. 11, 12.
b C. Simeon. M.A. A personal friend said to Mr. Lincoln, "Mr. President, do you really expect to

14—17. (14) **saw,** indic. of another attack on the city. **time appointed,** perhaps should be *place,* somewhere suited for gathering together his army. Or reference may be to appointment made with his confederates at Bethel. **before the plain,** Heb. the *Arabah,* the tract of land stretching down to the Jordan valley. (15) **made as if,** turning their backs after a little show of fighting. (16) **people,** *i.e.* soldiers. (17) **or Bethel,**[a] wh. was confederate with Ai, and had sent its entire army. **city open,** the very gates unprotected, having no thought of other foes.

Strategic movements (*v.* 15).—I. In the history of Christianity there have been times when the forces of Immanuel's army have appeared to be in full retreat. II. At such times the enemy has boastfully said, "I will overtake," etc. III. Subsequent events have often shown that the Leader of Israel was only heading a strategic movement as part of a preconcerted plan.

The reward of war.—The Duke of Marlborough observing a soldier leaning pensively on the butt-end of his musket, just after victory had declared itself in favour of the British arms at the battle of Blenheim, accosted him thus: "Why so pensive, my friend, after so glorious a victory?" "It may be glorious," replied the brave fellow, "but I am thinking that all the human blood I have spilled this day has only earned me fourpence."

18—21. (18) **stretch . . spear,** Jos. stood on the heights, at some chosen point of observation. A flag or streamer prob. hung from his spear. The ambush would set watchers to observe this signal. (19) **ambush,** poss. the 5,000 specially appointed entered the city, and the 25,000 fell on the rear of the Aites. (20) **no power to flee,** a sudden panic seized them. **people that fled,** soldiers forming the attacking party wh. ascended the valley. (21) The main host of wh. this company formed a part.

How Philip of Macedon took Prinassus.—Philip of Macedon won Prinassus by the following stratagem. He attempted first to undermine the city, but found the ground so rocky as to resist his most vigorous and repeated attempts. He still, however, persevered, and commanded his pioneers to make a more than ordinary bustle and noise below ground. In the night he caused earth to be secretly brought from a distance, and raised enormous mounds at the entrance of the mine, in order to inspire the besieged with the belief that the work went forward with astonishing rapidity. At length he informed the townsmen, that two acres of their wall were undermined, and stood upon wooden props, to which if he set fire and entered by a breach, they might expect no mercy. The Prinassians were deceived, and surrendered at discretion to an enemy, who could not with his utmost exertions have taken the town by real force.

22—27. (22) **midst of Is.,** quite surrounded. (23) **king . . alive,** for public execution. (24) **inhab. . . field,** the men, or soldiers, all of whom had hurried to the fight. (25) **men and women,** *i.e.* the adult population. (26) **drew . . back,** either a fig. of his earnestness in fully accomplishing the Div. will, or similar case to that at defeat of Amalek.[a] (27) **spoil,** such of the property as could be saved fr. the fire.

Persevering zeal recommended (see *v.* 26).—In this act of Joshua's we see—I. How our great Captain interests Himself for

us. II. How we are to engage in combat for ourselves. With—1. Determined purpose; 2. Confident expectation. Conclusion—(1) Think not lightly of the spiritual warfare; (2) Cease not to prosecute it till your victory is complete.[b]

War multiplies losses.—Thomas Jefferson both wrote and acted with great decision in favour of peace. "I stand in awe," he says in 1798, "at the mighty conflict to which two great nations (France and England) are advancing, and recoil with horror at the ferociousness of man. Will nations never devise a more rational umpire of differences than force? Are there no means of coercing injustice more gratifying to our nature than a waste of the blood of thousands, and of the labour of millions of our fellow-creatures? Wonderful has been the progress of human improvement in other respects. Let us then hope that the law of nature will in time influence the proceedings of nations as well as of individuals, and that we shall at length be sensible that war is an instrument entirely inefficient towards redressing wrong, and multiplies instead of indemnifying losses. Had the money which has been spent in the present war been employed in making roads, and constructing canals of navigation and irrigation through the country, not a hovel in the Highlands of Scotland, or the mountains of Auvergne, would have been without a boat at its door, a rill of water in every field, and a road to its market town.

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end this war during your administration?" "Can't say, can't say, sir." "But, Mr. Lincoln, what do you mean to do?" "Peg away, sir; peg away; keep pegging away!" And "pegging away" did it.

"Wars be to the body politic what drams are to the individual. There are times when they may prevent sudden death, but if frequently resorted to, or long persisted in, they heighten the energies only to hasten the dissolution."—*Colton.*

28–31. (28) **for ever,** often used in O. T. for a *very long time.* **desolation,** scene of ruins. The place identified with Ai is still called *Tell,* a heap of stones. (29) **hanged,** gibbeted, put to death first.[a] **take . . tree,** see law laid down by Mos.[b] **heap of stones,** a huge cairn, by this usage the grave of persons whose memory is infamous is still distinguished. (30) **Mt. Ebal,** about 20 miles fr. Ai; De. xi. 29. (31) **whole stones,** Ex. xx. 25. **burnt-offerings,** Ge. xxii. 7. **peace-off.,** Le. iii. 1.

Obedience for mercies.—God accounts those mercies forgotten which are not written with legible characters in our lives. That of Joshua is observable (chap. viii. 32). Upon their victory over the city of Ai an altar is built, as a monument of that signal mercy. Now mark, what doth God command to be writ or engraved upon the stones thereof? One would have thought the history of that day's work should have been the sculpture; but it is the copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel, whereby He plainly showed the best way of remembering the mercy was not to forget the law.[c]

altar of unhewn stones on Ebal

a Nu. xxv. 4.

b De. xxi. 22, 23, *vv.* 30–35. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 319.

"He holds no parley with unmanly fears; where duty bids he confidently steers, faces a thousand dangers at her call, and, trusting in his God, surmounts them all."—*Cowper.*

c Gurnall.

32–35. (32) **wrote . . stones,** as enjoined, De. xxvii. 2–8, prob. stone pillars were erected beside the altar. (33) **the ark,** wh. was set in the middle; the people were assembled near, but one part *towards* Ebal, or on the Ebal side: the other *towards* Gerizim; along the sides and base of each hill. (34) **read,** prob. caused Levites to read.[a] (35) This indic. that more than the usual *summary* was given on this occasion. It seems likely that these *vv.* (30–35) are not set in the proper context in our version; they come in better after ch. ix. 2.

Ebal and Gerizim

"All desp'rate hazards courage do create, as he plays frankly who has least estate: presence of mind, and courage in distress, are more than armies to procure success."—*Dryden.*

The whole law for the whole people (*v.* 35).—Note here—I. That the whole of the law was read. II. That it was read distinctly. III. That it was read to all Israel. Learn—1. The Word of God is not for the priests alone; 2. That it is not to be wrapt up in an

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unknown tongue; 3. How much less is the Gospel of any private interpretation.

Scene at Gerizim and Ebal.—"Those who have seen the spot where this wonderful event took place can readily realise the scene. Just where the two mountains approach each other nearest, are the two lower spurs, looking like two noble pulpits prepared by nature, and here the Levites would stand to read. The valley running between looks just like the floor of a vast place of worship. The slopes of both mountains recede gradually, and offer room for hundreds of thousands to be conveniently seated to hear the words of the law.—*Reading the law at Gerizim and Ebal.*—An objection has been raised, alleging that the distance between the two mountains is too great for the human voice to traverse. . . . Having satisfied myself more than once during my stay at Nablûs of its feasibility, a party of us resolved to make the experiment. We had pitched our tent in the valley near the foot of Gerizim, on the line between the two mountains, where I have supposed the ark to have formerly stood. I clambered up Gerizim, and Mr. Williams up Ebal, Mr. Edwards remaining with the men at the tent. Having reached the lower spur, I found myself standing, as it were, upon a lofty pulpit, and my friend found himself similarly situated on Ebal. Having rested awhile, I opened my Bible, and read the command concerning the blessings in Hebrew, and every word was heard most distinctly by Mr. Edwards in the valley, as well as by Mr. Williams on Ebal. Mr. Williams then read the cursings in Welsh, and we all heard every word and syllable. Before we descended, Mr. Edwards requested us to sing, and gave out, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,' &c. I commenced it upon the tune Savoy, or the Old Hundredth; but I pitched the tune in a key too high for them to join me. I was determined, however, to sing it through; and if I ever sang well and with spirit, I did so then on Gerizim, and was heard most distinctly by all. And it was our impression, and still is, that if the whole area before and around us had been filled with the hundreds of thousands of Israel, every soul amongst them would have heard every note and word with perfect clearness.[b]

a De. xxvii. 14.

"There is such fulness in that Book that oftentimes it says much by saying nothing; and not only its expression but its silences are teaching, like the dial in which the shadow as well as the light informs us."—*Boyle.*

"Procrustes, the robber of Attica, had a famous iron bedstead, whereon he was wont to lay his victims. If they were shorter than it, he stretched them to the desired length; if longer, he cut them to fit. Many theologians follow his example; they lay truth on the rack of preconceived formula, and bring it somehow, and at all hazards, to the required dimensions."—*Rev. Henry Gill.*

b *Mills's Nablus.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1, 2. (1) this side, the western side. **in the hills,** *etc.*, the hill country of central Canaan: the low country from Carmel to Gaza; and the shores of the Medit. (2) A common danger led to united action, though these nations contended among themselves.

the kings of Canaan form a league

True, you may not destroy grace by your inconsistencies, but you will greatly hinder its growth in your soul, and destroy your own enjoyment of it. Every man, without grace in his heart, is a hater of God. "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you," may be said to unconverted

Scotched but not killed v. (2.)—Our text brings before us—I. A united enemy. II. A united enemy composed of strange elements, forgetful of, or keeping in abeyance, national rivalries, etc. III. A united enemy on common ground, and for one common object. Learn—1. Modern times have witnessed compacts and confederacies not less strange; 2. Let the tribes of Israel, under their one Leader, be also united for the common weal of Christianity.

Our spiritual war.—Our spiritual war is a sore, fierce, and dangerous war. The truth of this was manifested in Christ our

Head, whom the devil hurried from wilderness to pinnacle, from pinnacle to mountain. What the devil did to Christ outwardly and visibly, he useth to do to others inwardly and secretly. The estate and condition of Christ while He lived on earth is a lively representation of the estate and condition of His Church in this world. Peter felt such a wrestling, so did Paul, so do all that slavishly yield themselves to the powers of the devil.[a]

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men universally. "Whatever be your gifts and graces, do not allow them stand in the place of Christ." *a W. Gouge.*

3—6. (3) **Gibeon,** capital of Hivites; now *El-Gib*, 5 to 6 miles north-west of Jerus.; at head of the pass of *Beth-horon*, leading fr. Jerus. to Joppa, and the coast.[a] (4) **wilily,** by stratagem, with insidious art: matching the device of Is. in capture of Ai; "they resolved to meet craft with craft." **old sacks,** *etc.*, travelling necessaries were so carried. **wine bottles,** made of skin: they wanted to indicate poverty and insignificancy, as well as to indicate their residing at a distance. (5) **clouted,**[b] patched. (6) **Gilgal,** Jos. iv. 19.

Cunning and discretion.—Cunning has only private, selfish aims, and sticks at nothing which may make them succeed: discretion has large and extended views, and, like a well-formed eye, commands a whole horizon. Cunning is a kind of short-sightedness, that discovers the minutest objects which are near at hand, but is not able to discern things at a distance. Discretion, the more it is discovered, gives a greater authority to the person who possesses it: cunning, when it is once detected, loses its force, and makes a man incapable of bringing about even those events which he might have done had he passed only for a plain man. Discretion is the perfection of reason, and a guide to us in all the duties of life: cunning is a kind of instinct, that only looks out after our immediate interests and welfare. Discretion is only found in men of strong sense and good understanding: cunning is often to be met with in brutes themselves, and in persons who are but the fewest removes from them. In short, cunning is only the mimic of discretion, and may pass upon weak men in the same manner as vivacity is often taken for wit, and gravity for wisdom.

the craft of the Gibeonites

a Fr. its situation it would have been the next prey onwhthe Is. host would have sprung."—*Stanley.*

b A.S. *clût*, a rag.

v. 3. Bp. Hall, Cont. Gibeonites; J. Saurin, iii. 93.

vv. 3—5. R. P. Buddicom, ii. 373.

v. 5. J. Cochrane, Serms. on Peculiar Texts, 25.

"In dealing with cunning persons, we must ever consider their ends to interpret their speeches; and it is good to say little to them, and that which they least look for. In all negotiations of difficulty a man may not look to sow and reap at once; but must prepare business, and so ripen it by degrees."—*Lord Bacon.*

7—10. (7) **how . . you?** for their orders *see* Ex. xxiii. 32, xxxiv. 12; Dc. vii. 2. (8, 9) **because of the name,** *etc.*, pretending relig. motives. (10) Reference is only made to events occurring before passage of Jordan.[a] This most of all threw Jos. off his guard. **Ashtaroth,** Jos. xii. 4, xiii. 12. 31.

Fame—a goodly reputation.—Nor is the desire of fame so vain as some have imagined; fame being, when belonging to the living, that which is more gravely called a steady and necessary reputation: and without it hereditary power or acquired greatness can never quietly govern the world. 'Tis to the dead a musical glory, in which God, the Author of excellent goodness, vouchsafes to take a continual share; for the remembered virtues of great men are chiefly such of His works (as mentioned by King David) as perpetually praise Him; and the good fame of the dead prevails by example much more than the reputation of the living, because the latter is always suspected by our envy, but the other is cheerfully allowed and religiously admired; for admiration, whose eyes are ever weak, stands still and at gaze upon great things acted afar off; but when they are near, walks slightingly away as from familiar objects. Fame is to our sons a

a "They represent themselves as not having yet heard of the aggression on Western Palestine, only of the bygone conquest of the Amorite kings beyond the Jordan."—*Stanley.*

vv. 8—16. Dr. Wordsworth, Occa. Serms. iv. 21.

"Fame to our ashes comes, alas! too late: and praise smells rank upon the coffin plate."—*Martial.*

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[b] *Davenant.*

Joshua deceived makes a peace with them

[a] Fr. *ligue*, Lat. *ligare*, to bind.

[b] Ex. xxviii. 30.

v. 15. *C. Simeon, M.A.*, ii. 586.

[c] *R. A. Griffin.*

"When the Spirit of God ceases altogether to strive with you, your day of grace is past and over. There is such a thing as the unpardonable sin; and wherever it occurs these three effects follow—there is henceforth no space, or place, or power of repentance."

"God accounts for His grace towards fallen man, the end being to manifest the riches of His glory; but He assigns no reason, except His own will, for its bestowment upon one more than another." "We have as much need of the Spirit of God to guide us into the right way as we have of the grace of God to deliver out of the wrong one."

the subtilty of Gibeon discovered

[a] Exr. ii. 25; Ne. vii. 29.

[b] *Robinson.*

[c] 1 Sa. vi. 20, 21, vii. 2; 2 Sa. vi. 2; Ps. cxxxii. 6.

[d] 2 Sa. xxi. 1—3

valid inheritance, and not unuseful to remote posterity; and to our reason 'tis a first, though but a little taste of eternity.[b]

11—15. (11) with you, lit. *in your hand.* league,[a] compact or treaty. (12) hot. as fr. the oven. (13) rent, with hard use during a long journey. (14) the men, *i.e.* the elders. took . . victuals, either to test the truth of their story; or, according to custom of Eastern nations, pledging peace by sharing food together. asked not, *etc.*, by Urim and Thummim;[b] a very strange neglect if Josh. was privy to it. (15) Josh. at least accepted terms made by elders.

Unadvised (*v.* 14).—Deceit has played no minor part in the history of the world. Many a strong fortress has yielded to it which long defied the power of strength. Many a noble cause has by it been lost; many a noble nature degraded. In this narrative we have an ill. of the folly and consequent punishment of those who are deceived. I. Let us show the probable cause of their disastrous neglect: "they asked not," etc. Why? 1. Their sympathies were enlisted. Feeling blinded them to duty. Feeling is a little child whose hand is full of luscious fruit: but she must not go alone: reason must take her hand, or the robber may have what was designed for the beggar. 2. Their pride was flattered: "we are your servants." A very flattering portrait often leads the person for whom it is intended to praise the faithfulness and honesty of the artist. 3. Or they thought the case so plain, they needed not to ask counsel. There is no step we take in life too trivial to be made a matter of prayer. II. Let us call to mind its sad effects. When they discovered their folly they could not break their word. 1. They had to tolerate Canaanites in the land—a source of weakness; 2. They were loaded with shame; 3. Deprived of a triumph; 4. Excited discontent in their own camp; 5. A heavy curse fell on the deceivers. Application:—Judge not by appearances. Trust not in your own discernment. "Lean not to thine own understanding." Beware of rashness, self-sufficiency, and flattery.[c]

The renewed soul a scene of conflict.—Every renewed soul is the scene and stage wherein the two mightiest contraries in the world—the spirit and the flesh, light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell, good and evil, Michael and his angels, and the dragon with his—are perpetually combating hand to hand. And well it is for a Christian that the Holy Spirit is lusting in him against the flesh. God takes thy part, Christian; the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts is with thee. if thou dost not sin and grieve Him away. Follow but thy Leader, be prompt and ready to start at the Divine signal, when the Holy Ghost displays His ensigns, then march forth under those mighty and victorious banners, and thou shalt become invincible.

16—21. (16) end of three days, as in ch. iii. 2. neighbours, their city was within 20 miles of Gilgal. (17) third day, longer time than necessary, no occasion for a forced march. Gibeon, *v.* 3. Chephirah,[a] modern *Kefir*. Jos. xviii. 25, 26. Beeroth, modern *Birch*, 8 miles N. of Jerusalem. Kirjath-jearim, *city of woods*, or forests; modern *Kuriet-el-Enab*.[b] 9 miles fr. Jer. on road to Jaffa. Jos. xv. 60.[c] (18) murmured, *etc.*, sparing the Gibeonites seemed unfaithfulness to Jehovah. (19) touch them, to kill them. (20) live,[d] but only live; they

were to be so humiliated as to make life almost worthless. (21) **hewers,** *etc.*, lowest menial offices;[e] called *Nethinims, i.e.* given, appropriated.

Binding nature of a vow (*v.* 20). It is plain—I. That the Israelites considered themselves bound by their oath, and exposed to the wrath of God if they violated it. II. That their adherence to their oath was acceptable to God—1. Because He expressed no displeasure at the time; 2. From the nature of His subsequent dealings with them. He avenged the violation of this treaty by Saul. Learn:—1. Make vows with the utmost caution; 2. Keep them with scrupulous fidelity; 3. How much have they to answer for who by craft exact improper pledges.

Drawers of water.—"Drawing water was the office of the meanest slaves." In illustration of this, the following lines from the *Iliad* may be quoted. Hector, in taking leave of his wife Andromache, says:—

"I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led!
* * * * * *
To bear the victor's hard commands, or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring."[f]

Adopted captives.—When the different tribes of Indians on the Ohio were compelled by the expedition of General Bouquet to deliver up all the Europeans whom they had taken captives for a series of years, the tender reluctance with which they made the surrender was singularly remarkable. The chief of the Shawanese, addressing the English, said, "Fathers, we have brought your flesh and blood to you; they have been all united to us by adoption; and although we now deliver them, we will always look upon them as our relations, whenever the Great Spirit is pleased that we may visit them. We have taken as much care of them as if they were our own flesh and blood. Many of them are now become unacquainted with your customs and manners, and therefore we request you will use them tenderly and kindly, which will induce them to live contentedly with you." The regard of the Indians to their captive friends continued all the time they remained in the English camp. They visited them from day to day, loaded them with presents of corn, skins, and other articles: and displayed all the marks of the most sincere and tender affection. Nor did they stop here: for when the army marched, some of the Indians solicited and obtained leave to accompany their former captives all the way to Fort Pitt; and exercised their skill in hunting, to obtain for them every delicacy which the forest could supply. Cruel and unmerciful in war as the Indians, through habit and long example, are, yet whenever they come to give way to the native dictates of humanity, they have exhibited virtues which Christians need not blush to imitate.

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[e] De. xxix. 11.

"But when the fox hath once got in his nose, he'll soon find means to make the body follow." — *Shakespeare.*

"To conceal anything from those to whom I am attached is not in my nature. I can never close my lips where I have opened my heart." — *Dickens.*

"Their services are, clock-like, to be set backward and forward at their lord's command." — *Ben Jonson.*

[f] *Iliad*, bk. vi.

"Although heaven be given us freely, yet we must strive for it. Our work is great, our Master is urgent, our time is short. We must be earnest as well as diligent. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.'"

"I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it [slavery]." — *Geo. Washington.*

"It is injustice to permit slavery to remain for a single hour." — *William Pitt.*

22–27. (22) **beguiled,** imposed on us. (23) **cursed,** or humiliated.[a] **none of you,** Heb. idiom, *not be cut off from you.* **bondmen,** devoted to God, not as Jericho, but to bond-service in His sanctuary. (24) **sore afraid,**[b] their fear of their lives gives poor account of their courage. (25) **in thy hand,** willing to submit to thy judgment. (26) **so did he,** as *v.* 23. (27) **for the altar,**[c] in connection with the altar. **place . . choose,** De. xii. 5.

the Gibeonites made hewers of wood, etc.

[a] Ge. ix. 25.

[b] Ex. xxiii. 32, 33; De. vii. 1, 2.

[c] Ps. lxxxiv. 10; Lu. xv. 19; Ga. iv. 1, 2.

Hewers of wood (*v.* 27).—Note—I. The class represented by these

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"Ere the base laws of servitude began, when wild in woods the noble savage ran."—*Dryden.*

"Well fare their hearts who will not only wear out their shoes, but also their feet in God's service, and yet gain not a shoe latchet thereby."—*Thomas Fuller.*

"Sir, I envy neither the heart nor the head of that man from the North, who rises here [in congress] to defend slavery from principle."—*John Randolph.*

"Slavery is a state so improper, so degrading, so ruinous to the feelings and capacities of human nature, that it ought not to be suffered to exist."—*Burke.*

d Paxton.

people. 1. Deceivers in general, whose deception involves the penalty of profitless toil; 2. The world, that has a theoretical faith in the power of the Church, and not a saving faith to warrant admission into the Church; 3. Worldly helpers of the Church, like those who helped to build the ark but did not enter it. II. The truth illustrated by this history. 1. Those who are not of the Church shall yet subserve its interests; 2. The deceivers of Israel shall be the unwilling helpers of the cause of God.

Servile bondage.—In the kingdom of Algiers, the women and children are charged with the care of their flocks and their herds, with providing food for the family, cutting fuel, fetching water, and when their domestic affairs allow them, with tending their silk-worms. The daughters of the Turcomans in Palestine are employed in the same mean and laborious offices. In Homer, Andromache fed the horses of her heroic husband. It is probable the cutting of wood was another female occupation. The very great antiquity of these customs is confirmed by the prophet Jeremiah, who complains that the children were sent to gather wood for idolatrous purposes; and in his Lamentations he bewails the oppressions which his people suffered from their enemies in these terms: "They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood." Hence the servile condition to which the Gibeonites were reduced by Joshua, for imposing upon him and the princes of the congregation, appears to have been much more severe than we are apt at first to suppose: "Now, therefore, ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the house of my God." The bitterness of their doom did not consist in being subjected to a laborious service, for it was the usual employment of women and children; but in their being degraded from the characteristic employment of men, that of bearing arms, and condemned with their posterity for ever to the employment of females.[d]

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

confederation against Gibeon

1—5. (1) **Adoni-zedek,** comp. *Melchi-zedek,*[a] also King of Salem. **Jerusalem,** prob. meaning, *foundation of peace;* ancient names, *Salem, Jebus;* modern, El-Kuds. (2) **as one of,** *etc.,* Gibeon prob. a republic, no king is named.[b] (3) **Hebron,** Ge. xiii. 18, xxiii. 2; Jos. x. 36, xv. 54. **Jarmuth,** now Tarmuk, situated on hill called Tell Armuth;[c] allotted to Judah.[d] **Lachish,** not identified, poss. *Um Lakis,* 20 miles W. of Eleutheropolis. **Eglon,** near Lachish, modern Ajlan, 10 miles N.E. fr. Gaza. (4) **smite Gibeon,** so discourage and check advance of Israel. (5) **encamped,** made regular siege.

The confederacy against Gibeon.—I. Of whom it was composed. 1. Its head. A bad king with a good name, Adoni-zedek, *i.e.* lord of righteousness; 2. Its following. Horam, Piram, *etc.* II. The purpose of its formation. War against deceiving Gibeon. Learn—1. Title not always an index to character; 2. Deception involves men in trouble. Gibeon by deceiving Israel exposed to the anger of old allies.

Some of the difficulties in the way of warlike alliances.—In his (Geo. III.) majesty's first speech from the throne he declared his

a Ge. xiv. 18.

b Jos. ix. 3.

c Robinson.

d Jos. xv. 35; Ne. xi. 29.

On whole cap. see Bp. Cooper's Brief Expos.; Bp. Hall, Contemp.; Saurin's Jos. Hist., etc. iii. 117; Jacob Bryant's Obs. 157.

"In these distracted times, when each man

resolution to support the King of Prussia with his heartiest concurrence, and to maintain the war with firmness and vigour until the enemy should be brought to just terms of accommodation. This clause is said to have been inserted not spontaneously by the king, but at the earnest instigation of Mr. Pitt. The King of Prussia had always been a great favourite with the English nation, whose generous sympathy in his fortunes seemed to rise in proportion to the increasing number and success of his enemies. With the English Court, however, Frederick was so much the reverse of being on friendly terms that until the two last years of George II.'s reign there were no two courts in Christendom who hated each other more cordially than those of St. James and Berlin. Frederick, among other means which he took to gall the feelings of the British monarch, had for his ambassador at Paris an attainted peer of Britain, the Earl Marischal, and would receive no other in return from France but one of the same stamp, the Earl Tyrconnel; both of whom wore the Order of the Garter, given them by the Chevalier, and the former always with great ostentation, when in the presence of Lord Albemarle, the British ambassador, who appeared with the same order duly conferred on him by George II. It was owing to the wise counsels of Mr. Pitt that a reconciliation was at length brought about between the two courts, and to his bold and well-concerted measures that the alliance was followed up with a degree of success which flattered the proudest hopes of the British people, and made a declaration of perseverance in the same course one of the most acceptable assurances they could possibly receive from their new sovereign.[e]

6—11. (6) **slack not,** the case needed bold and prompt action. (7) **Gilgal,** Jos. iv. 19; with select portion of army Jos. made forced night march. (8) This reassurance was needed bec. the league with Gibeon was depressing Joshua, and host to be attacked the most formidable Jos. had met.[a] (9) **suddenly,** in early morning, to the surprise of both besiegers and besieged. (10) **discomfited them,** same word used 1 Sa. vii. 10, suggests its reference to the hailstorm. (10) **Beth-horon,** *house of caves;* there was an *Upper* and a *Nether Beth-horon,* and between the two a steep pass, still very rocky and rough.[b] (11) **down to,** towards *Nether Beth-horon.* Fugitives outstripped the pursuers. **hailstones,** tempest with hail; not meteoric stones.

The Lord fighting for Israel.—I. This event illustrates the resources of Providence. II. Those who contend with God forget that nature becomes an arsenal whose agencies and forces may be employed against them. III. Who hath fought against God and prospered? (Ill. the Armada scattered by a tempest.)

Hailstorm on the Bosphorus.—"We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way, when a cloud arising in the west gave promise of rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and of a whitish appearance. We soon discovered it to be large balls of ice falling. Immediately we heard a sound like rumbling thunder or ten thousand carriages rolling furiously over the pavement. The whole Bosphorus was in a foam, as though heaven's artillery had been discharged upon us and our frail bark. Our umbrellas

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dreads the bloody stratagem of busy heads."—*Otway.*

"I am more and more convinced of this world's tastelessness and treachery — that it is with God alone that any satisfying converse is to be had."—*Chalmers.*

"Wordly possessions, through human depravity, are often not helps but hindrances in the way of true religion."

e Percy Anec.

"To reign is worth ambition, though in hell; better to reign in hell than serve in heaven."—*Milton.*

battle of Beth-horon

a "The battle of Gibeon is one of the most important in the history of the world; it is one of the few military engagements wh. belong equally to ecclesiastical and to civil history, which have decided equally the fortunes of the world and of the Church."—*Stanley.*

b "Israel pursued the enemy in N.W. direction, towards the pass of Bethhoron, and fr. thence through the pass down into the plain, where prob. Azekah and Makkedah lay."—*Lange,*

vv. 6, 7. R. P., Buddicom. Christ. Exod. ii. 395.

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"God's promises are not intended to slacken or supersede, but to quicken and encourage our own endeavours."—*M. Henry.*

See *Notes and Queries*, 3 *Serm.* 240—245.

See *Timbs' Pop. Science*, p. 22.

were torn into ribbons, and our fate seemed inevitable. Fortunately, we had a bullock's hide in the boat, and under it we crawled, saving ourselves from further injury. One of the oarsmen had his hand literally smashed, another was much injured in the shoulder. It was the most awful and terrific scene I ever witnessed. The scene lasted perhaps five minutes; but it was five minutes of the most awful feeling I ever experienced. When it passed over we found the surrounding hills covered with masses of ice, the trees stripped of their limbs and leaves, and all looking desolate. Many of the inhabitants of the villages had their bones broken, and some were killed outright. It is impossible to convey to you an idea of the scene. Imagine, however, the heavens suddenly frozen, and as suddenly broken into irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound in weight, and precipitated to the earth."

the sun and moon stand still

12—14. These *vv.* are an inserted extract fr. a poetical book, known as the Bk. of Jasher[a] (*v.* 13). (12) Remember that the storm temporarily obscured the sun; and that hill of Gibeon would hide its light from the valleys below. Sun and moon may be seen in the sky together, though they cannot effectively shine together. **Ajalon,** place of deer, or gazelles; now *Merj-Ibn-Omeir.*[b] (13) **Jasher,**[c] or of the *upright*, a poetical appellation of Israel. Probably a collection of national songs in honour of renowned and pious heroes. **about a whole day,** *i.e.* 12 hours.[d] (14) **hearkened,** in such a wonderful way.

The miracle of the sun and moon standing still.—From this miracle we may learn—I. Whither to have recourse for help, whenever the state of the weather has proved unfavourable to our respective undertakings. II. By what unlikely means the Almighty brings about the deliverance of His people, and the discomfiture of His enemies. III. To praise God for dispensing the beams of the sun and moon over us. IV. To ascribe all proper honour to Christ, by comparing His miracles with this.[e]

El Jib—the Gibeon of the Bible.—This village is situated on an isolated and rocky hill of moderate elevation, with plains, valleys, and higher mountains all around it. Remains of ancient buildings, tombs, and quarries indicate a large and important city, though now it is a miserable hamlet, occupied by a few hundred sour and stupid Moslem peasants. We, of course, drank of the famous fountain, deep under the perpendicular rock in the vale to the south-east of the village. . . . It must have been somewhere in these open plains east of Jib that the great battle took place, and the memorable rout and flight of the Canaanitish host down Wady Talo (Ajalon), when Joshua said, in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand thou still," etc., an event fit to immortalise any site on earth.[f]

the five kings in the cave at Makkedah

15—19. (15) This *v.* properly ends quotation fr. Jasher. Jos. did not return just immediately. *v.* 43. (16) Resumes narrative fr. *v.* 11. (17) **Makkedah,**[a] place of shepherds; only know that it, and *Azekah*, were in the low country of Judah. (18) **great stones,** closing the narrow entrance. (19) **smite the hindmost,** lit. *cut off the tail*; this haste was necess. bec. the day was passing, and the fugitives were making for the walled cities.

Vain concealments.—The five kings concealed in the cave

a *Spk. Comm., Hengstenberg, Keil.*

b *Thomson, Land and Book.*

c 2 Sa. i. 18.

d Comp. Ju. vi. 20.

See on this mir. *D. S. Deyling. Obs.* i. 100; *W. Keating, A.M., Ss.* i. 290; *Mir. of Joshua, Kitto's Journal*, iii.; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 330; *M. Cowie, M.A., Huls. Lec.* 155. *v.* 12. *E. Butcher, Ss.* 134.

v. 13. *Dr. G. D'Oyly, Ss.* ii. 285; *Alfred Williams, Ss.* iii. 429.

e *H. A. Herbert, B.A.*

f *Ld. and Book*, 668.

a Am. ix. 2, 3; Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8; Is. ii. 19.

v. 19. *Vulg.* "cut off the last of the fugitives." *Arab.* "clip off their

may remind us first—I. Of the false security of the wicked. II. Of the safe keeping of the wicked. III. Of the ultimate exposure of the wicked and their punishment. Learn:—The only sure and safe refuge for the ungodly is the mercy of God in Christ.

Battle of Malplaquet.—In this celebrated battle, so glorious to the British arms, the Prince of Orange was the most daring of all the commanders engaged in the dreadful conflict. He led on the first nine battalions under a tremendous shower of grape and musketry. He had scarcely advanced a few paces, when the brave Oxenstiern was killed by his side, and several aides-de-camp and attendants successively dropped as he advanced. His own horse being killed, he rushed forward on foot; and as he passed the opening of the great flanking battery, whole ranks were swept away; yet he reached the entrenchment, and waving his hat, in an instant the breastwork was forced at the point of the bayonet by the Dutch guards and Highlanders. But before they could deploy, they were driven from the post by an impetuous charge from the troops of the French left, who had been rallied by Marshal Boufflers. At this moment the corps under Dohna moved gallantly against the battery on the road, penetrated into the embrasures, and took some colours; but ere they reached the front of the breastwork, were mown down by the battery on the flank. A dreadful carnage took place among all the troops in this concerted attack; Spaar lay dead upon the field of battle; Hamilton was carried off wounded; and the lines beginning to waver, recoiled a few paces. Calling up fresh spirit to recover from this repulse, the heroic Prince of Orange mounted another horse, that was also shot under him; still his energy remained unshaken: on foot he rallied the nearest troops; and seizing a standard from the regiment of Mey, marched almost alone to the entrenchment. He planted the colours upon the bank, and called aloud, "Follow me, my friends, here is your post!" His gallant troops followed their leader. Again the onset was renewed, but it was no longer possible to force the enemy; for the second line had closed up, and the whole breastwork bristled with bayonets, and blazed with fire. Although again repulsed, the Prince of Orange would not be dissuaded from returning once more to the charge; and at length actually carried the seemingly impregnable entrenchment.[b]

20–24. (20) **fenced cities,** there finding only temporary rest, *vv.* 28—43. (21) **camp . . Makkedah,** where Jos. staid, while detachments pursued the fugitives. **none moved his tongue,** proverbial expression, for all enemies were subdued.[a] (22) **then,** prob. next morning. **open the mouth,** *see v.* 18. (23) **brought forth,** for more deliberate execution. (24) **put your feet,** *etc.*, a great indignity; in E. sign of subjection and servitude.[b]

Joshua's victory over the confederate kings (*vv.* 24, 25).—I. The occasion of the confederacy. II. The means by which it was defeated. III. The extent of that defeat. IV. The prospect it afforded the people in all their future conflicts. Application:—To (1) Those who put discouragements in the way of repenting sinners; (2) Those who yield to discouragement.[c]

Moving the tongue.—When a person speaks of the fear to which his enemy is reduced, he says, "Ah! he dares not now to shake

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hindmost." See Heb. in De. xxv. 18. "Servants, dependents, or courtiers in the East always *follow* their superiors. Should one of them cease to serve or follow his master or patron, having gained his end, another on seeing this asks, 'Where is your tail?' 'The tail has been long in my way: I have cut it off.'"—*Roberts.*

See *Porter, Hd. Bk. for Syria*, 239. "If the wicked flourish, and thou suffer, be not discouraged; they are fatted for destruction, thou art dieted for health."—*Fuller.*

"Beware ambition; heaven is not reach'd with pride, but with submission."—*Middleton.*

"Fatal ambition! say what wondrous charms delude mankind, to toil for thee in arms!"—*Rowe.*

b Percy Anec.

the king brought out of the cave

a Ex. xi. 7.

b Ps. cx. 1; 1 Co. xv. 25. *J. Puckle, Ss.* ii. 254.

c Simeon, M.A.

"We are told that Valerian in chains, but invested with the imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spec-

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tacle of fallen greatness; and that whenever the Persian monarch (Sapor) mounted on horseback he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor."—*Gibbon. d Roberts.*

the five kings are hung

[a] Gal. iii. 13.

[b] De. xxi. 22, 23; Jos. viii. 29.

"It is in the time of trouble, when some, to whom we may have looked for consolation and encouragement, regard us with coldness, and others, perhaps, treat us with hostility, that the warmth of the friendly heart and the support of the friendly hand acquire increased value, and demand additional gratitude."—*Bishop Mant.*

"We should neither court neglect, nor dread to bear it."—*Byron.*

battle of Makkedah

[a] Jos. xv. 42, xxi. 13; 1 Chr. vi. 57.

[b] Jos. xv. 21, 39; Is. xxxvii. 8.

"He is not worthy of the honeycomb that shuns the hive because the bees have stings."—*Shakespeare.*

"All thy virtue dictates dare to do."—*Mason.*

his tongue against me." "He hurt you! the fellow will not shake his tongue against you."—*Feet on the necks of enemies.*—This in the East is a favourite way of triumphing over a fallen foe. In the history of the battles of the gods, or giants, particular mention is made of the closing scene, how the conquerors went and trampled on their enemies. When people are disputing, should one be a little pressed, and the other begin to triumph, the former will say, "I will tread upon thy neck, and after that beat thee." A low-caste man insulting one who is high, is sure to hear some one say to the offended individual, "Put your feet on his neck." (*See on* Isa. xviii. 2, 7.)[d]

25—27. (25) So glorious a conquest must be taken as pledge of further victories. (26) **slew them,** this was usual before hanging. Exposure of a corpse thus on a tree was counted supreme indignity.[a] (27) **took them down,** according to Mosaic law.[b]

Words of encouragement.—Observe—I. Joshua could not have so encouraged Israel if God had not previously encouraged him. II. Joshua having been encouraged himself did his utmost to encourage others. III. The encouragement he offered was the voice of his own experience, and an echo of the comfortable words of God.

Encouragement of a brave chief.—There is a touching fact related in the history of a Highland chief, of the noble house of M'Gregor, who fell, wounded by two balls, at the battle of Prestonpans. Seeing their chief fall, the clan wavered, and gave the enemy an advantage. The old chieftain, beholding this effect of his disaster, raised himself up on his elbow, while the blood gushed in streams from his wounds, and cried aloud—"I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you to see you do your duty." These words revived the sinking courage of his brave Highlanders. There was a charm in the fact that they still fought under the eye of their chief. It roused them to put forth their mightiest energies; and they did all that human strength could do to stem and turn the dreadful tide of battle. And is there not a more powerful charm for thee, O Christian, in the fact that you contend, in the battle-field of life, under the eye of your Saviour? Wherever you are—however oppressed by foes—however exhausted by the stern strife with evil—the eye of Christ is fixed most lovingly upon thee.

28—32. Jos. proceeds to take possession of the cities of the district, wh. are now undefended. (28) **as he did,** *etc.*, Jos. vi. 21. (29) **Libnah,**[a] *whiteness,* site not certainly identified: either *Arak-el-Menshiyeh,* or *Tell-es-Safieh.* (30) **none remain,** *i.e.* alive. (31) **Lachish,**[b] *v.* 3. (32) **second day,** indicating that they made show of resistance.

Utter destruction (*v.* 28)—"He utterly destroyed them:" God, through Joshua's instrumentality, gave no quarter, so to speak, to the offending Canaanites. Regard this as—I. A just expression of God's hatred of sin. II. A fit and righteous punishment of glaring iniquity. III. A distinctly expressed warning to others. IV. A type and foreshadowing of the great destruction which shall surely come upon the wicked.

Seige of Strasburg.—There were 241 pieces of artillery placed in battery by the besiegers. During the 31 days over which the

regular operations extended these fired 193,722 shots; an average of 6,249 per day, or 269 per hour, or between four and five a minute. In the catalogue it is stated that 73,000 grenades came out of rifled twelve and twenty-four pounders; nearly 6,000 bombs, of from seven to fifty pounds, from smooth-bore mortars; besides shrapnels and long grenades from guns of various structure and calibre. In more than one meaning this was truly a *feu d'enfer*.[c]

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c Leisure Hour.

"War, that mad game the world s loves to play."—*Swift.*

33–36. (33) **Gezer,**[a] *a steep place*, on W. border of tribe of Ephraim; it was not effectually subdued at this time. (34) **Eglon,**[b] *v.* 3. (35) **that day,** showing the town was small, and offered little resistance. (36) **Hebron,**[c] *v.* 3; Ge. xiii. 18. **went up,** fr. the plain to the hill-country.

Lachish and Eglon captured

a Jos. xvi. 3. 10; Ju. i. 29; 1 Ki. ix. 15, 17; 1 Chr. vii. 28.

b Jos. xv. 21, 39.

c Nu. xiii. 22; Ju. i. 10; Jos. xiv. 13–15, xv. 13, 14.

The victorious campaign.—I. What could withstand Joshua? Not great distances, fenced cities, numerous and united enemies. II. Joshua type of Jesus: who or what can withstand Him? III. We, like Joshua, have a life of conflict before us, but may come off more than conquerors through Him who fighteth for us.

Early Christians and war.—The absolute inconsistency of war with the Gospel was the prevalent belief of the early Christians. Justin Martyr, A.D. 140, quoting the prophecy of Isaiah already cited, says, "That these things have come to pass you may be readily convinced; for we who were once slayers of one another do not now fight against our enemies." Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, 167, discusses the same prophecy, and proves its relation to our Saviour by the fact that the followers of Jesus had disused the weapons of war, and no longer knew how to fight. Tertullian, 200, indeed alludes to Christians who were engaged in military pursuits; but, on another occasion, informs us that many soldiers quitted those pursuits in consequence of their conversion to Christianity, and repeatedly expresses his own opinion that any participation in war is unlawful for believers in Jesus, not only because of the idolatrous practices in the Roman armies, but because Christ has forbidden the use of the sword and the revenge of injuries. Origen, 230, in his work against Celsus, says: "We no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn any more to make war. We have become, for the sake of Jesus, the children of peace. By our prayers we fight for our king abundantly, but take no part in his wars, even though he urge us."[d]

"Be great in act, as you have been in thought; be stirring as the time; be fire with fire; threaten the threatener, and outface the brow of bragging horror; so shall inferior eyes, that borrow their behaviours from the great, grow great by your example, and put on the dauntless spirit of resolution."—*Shakespeare.*

d Cheever.

"There are few die well that die in battle."—*Shakespeare.*

37–43. (37) **utterly,** prob. as being a leading and important place. (38) **Debir,** or *Kirjath-sephir*;[a] *Kirjath-sannah*.[b] (39) See second account of its capture.[c] (40) **south,** or the *Negeb.* **springs,** or slopes; undulating ground between the lowlands and the hills.[d] (41) **Kadesh-barnea,** Nu. xiii. 26. **Gaza,** limit of the present conquest on the W. **Goshen,** not identified, xv. 51, evidently in S. part of territory of Judah. (42) **at one time,** during this first expedition. (43) **returned,** comp. *v.* 15.

Hebron and Debir taken; conquest of the south completed

a Jos. xv. 15; Ju. i. 11.

b Jos. xv. 49.

c Jos. xv. 15, 17.

d De. iii. 17, marg.

Divine sovereignty (*v.* 42).—I. God has an indisputable right to dispense His favours to what persons and in what proportions He pleases. As sole proprietor of the universe it is His to dispose of —1. Worldly goods; 2. Bodily constitution and health; 3. Mental qualifications; 4. Spiritual privileges. II. He has an equal right

v. 40. *Dr. W. Paley. Ss.* 429; *R. Warner. Old Ch. of Eng. Prin.*

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fl. 201; *W. H. Mill, Ss.* 117; *J. H. Gurney, Ss. on Old. Test. Hist.* 121.

He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer the worst that man can breathe, and make his wrongs his outsides, to wear them like his raiment, carelessly; and ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart, to bring it into danger." —*Dryden.*

to resume or to transfer His favours. III. He may justly punish every voluntary transgression of His righteous and equitable laws. IV. In executing His righteous purposes, God may employ what agency or instrumentality He pleases. Learn—(1) Reverence; (2) Dependence; (3) Humility; (4) Gratitude; (5) Confidence and obedience.

Jewish wars of extermination.—De Quincey has called attention to the fact that in these wars of extermination, if rightly viewed, there resided a true and transcendent spirit of mercy, since they maintained the unity of God against polytheism, and, by trampling on cruel idolatries, indirectly opened the channels for benign principles of morality through endless generations of men. There was a wisdom which looked far into the future, though the present severity seemed to approach, or actually amount to, cruelty. But yet, on consideration, we shall observe many indications of a relenting kindness and a tenderness of love in the Mosaic ordinances.

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CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

confederacy of the kings of the north

1—5. Confederacy of the kings of *northern* part of Canaan. (1) **Jabin,** the *intelligent,* prob. an hereditary and royal title, like Pharaoh, Cæsar, etc. **Hazor,**[a] situated near Lake Merom, and capital of district. **Madon,** xii. 19. **Shimron,** xii. 20, xix. 15. **Achshaph,** xix. 25. (2) **mountains,** the mount. district of Galilee. **plains,** the N. part of Arabah, or Jordan valley. **Chinneroth,** = Gennesaret. **borders of Dor,**[b] highlands of Dor; a royal town below Carmel, 6 miles fr. Cesarea. (3) **Canaanite,** iii. 10. **Hermon,** De. iii. 9. **Mizpeh,** or *Mizpah,* a plain stretching south-westwards fr. Hermon. Other places were so named.[c] (4) **chariots,** tipped with iron, xvii. 18. (5) **Merom,** the upper waters, now *Lake Huleh.*

Evil companions.—The following beautiful allegory is translated from the German :—Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not suffer even his grown-up sons and daugters to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright. "Dear father," said the gentle Eulalia to him one day, when he forbade her, in company with her brother, to visit the volatile Lucinda—"Dear father, you must think us very childish if you imagine that we should be exposed to danger by it." The father took, in silence, a dead coal from the hearth, and reached it to his daughter. "It will not burn you, my child, take it." Eulalia did so, and behold! her beautiful white hand was soiled and blackened, and as it chanced, her white dress also. "We cannot be too careful in handling coals," said Eulalia in vexation. "Yes, truly," said the father; "you see, my child, the coals, even if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the vicious."

6—9. (6) **hough,**[a] cut tendons of hind hoofs, so render hopelessly lame. (7) **suddenly,** swiftness of Joshua's marches introduces a new style of warfare; huge armies move slowly, requiring to keep near their base of operations. Comp. the tactics of the first Napoleon. (8) **great Zidon,** chief city of Phœnicia. **Misrephoth-maim,**[b] *burnings of waters,* near Zidon, and prob. the Zarephath or Sarepta of Scrip.[c] (9) **burnt,** *etc.,*[d] showing chariots were only iron-tipped.

they are defeated at the waters of Merom

a Is. viii. 12, 13; Ps. xx. 7, 8; xxxiii. 16, 17; 2 S. viii. 4.

b "Smelting factories near the

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Character of Joshua.—I. A brave man. Had fought battles before (Ex. xvii. 9). II. That fight with Amalek was forty years before this. So he began to fight young. III. Knew how to serve as well as how to fight (Ex. xxiv. 13, xxxiii. 11). IV. Not afraid to stand alone (Nu. xiv. 6—10). V. Whence this courage? A man of faith; believed God's promises (Nu. xiv. 8).

Capture of Ciudad Rodrigo.—The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the late war in Spain, deserves to rank with the proudest deeds of the British army; it being probably the only well-authenticated instance of a retrenched breach, fully manned, and prepared for defence, being carried by an effort of cool and deliberate courage, against a brave and skilful enemy. Lord Wellington, who directed the siege, observing strong indications of an advance of the enemy to relieve the place, decided upon giving the assault as soon as the breaches should be judged practicable. In consequence, such were the exertions made to push forward the attack, that two good breaches were effected on the thirteenth day, notwithstanding the garrison fired above 11,000 large shells, and nearly an equal number of shot, without a single round being fired against the defences in return. General Picton's division was directed to assault the larger, and General Crawford's division the lesser; whilst the demonstration of an escalade, to divert the attention of the garrison, was directed to be made on the opposite side of the place, by a body of the Portuguese, under General Pack. At 9 a.m. the leading brigade of each division most cheerfully moved forward, preceded by parties of sappers, carrying some hundreds of bags of hay, which they threw into the ditch to lessen its depth. Major-General M'Kinnon first descended opposite the great breach; at which moment hundreds of shells and various combustibles, which had been arranged along the foot of the rubbish, prematurely exploded, and exhausted themselves before the troops arrived within the sphere of their action. The men gallantly ascended the breach against an equally gallant resistance; and it was not until after a sharp struggle that the bayonets of the assailants prevailed, and gained them a footing on the summit of the rampart. There, behind an interior retrenchment, the garrison redoubled their defensive efforts; but nothing could long resist the ardour of the attacking columns, and the French gave way at the very moment that the lesser breach was forced; then, being attacked on both flanks, they took refuge in the town, where they were pursued from house to house, till all the survivors were made prisoners.[e]

10—14. (10) **smote with sword,**[a] prob. beheaded, comp. x. 26. (11) **burnt Hazor,** in a deliberate manner, making the chief city an impressive example. (13) **still in their strength,** marg. *on their heap,* or each on its own hill. (14) **spoil,** of household and royal property.

Extirpation of the Canaanites.—Infidels say, that it seems wholly inconsistent with what we should suppose to be the merciful character of God, that He should thus command whole nations to be destroyed by the sword. But when we hear that pestilence has depopulated crowded cities, or that Napoleon has swept the continent of Europe, and left but the wrecks of smoking homes and the bones of slaughtered citizens to be the mementos of his march, we do not say that this is a proof that there is no

waters." — *Gesenius.* "On the north border of the plain of Acre, now called Musheirifeh." — *Thomson.*

c Jos. xiii. 6.

d Jos. x. 9.

In the battle of Bannockburn, the Scotch dug a great number of small holes in front of their position; so that the English horse, charging over the honeycombed ground, were thrown into confusion.

"A man who has a noble cause, and who subordinates, and even sacrifices himself to it—he is a great man. A man who does his duty in despite of all outward contradiction, and who reverences his conscience so greatly as that to preserve it unharmed he will face any difficulty and submit to any penalty—he is a great man."—*Dr. Ferguson.*

e Percy Anec.

Hazor is taken and burnt

a Nu. xxxiii 52, 53; De. vii. 2.

"Just as the traveller, whom we see on yonder mountain height, began his ascent from the plain, so the greatest man of whom our world can boast is but one

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God in heaven, nor any moral government of the inhabitants of the earth; and yet, if the destruction of the nations of the Canaanites immediately by God is a proof that the Bible which records it is not the inspiration of God, then the destruction of nations by the sword of the conqueror or by the breath of pestilence must be a proof that there is no God, or that creation is not the work of God, nor providence a part of the general government of God. When we see juries in our own country bringing in a verdict of guilty, the judge pronouncing sentence of death, and that sentence executed, we do not complain that there is anything wrong or unjust in the act. Now these Canaanites are declared and proved to have polluted and stained the land with abominable crimes: they had time and were urged to repent of them, and thus escape destruction; and when they were cut off by the sword of Heaven, it was merely the holy judge pronouncing sentence on flagrant criminals, and the righteous governor executing that sentence to the letter. We are not to regard the extirpation of the Canaanites as an act of arbitrary or private revenge, but as the execution of the sentence of retributive justice, and such as had perhaps as great mercy to the innocent as equity to the guilty.[b]

the conquest of the whole land completed

15—20. (15, 16) **Goshen,** x. 41. (17) **mount Halak,**[a] *smooth mountain*, the southern limit of Jos.'s conquests. **Seir,** Ge. xiv. 6. **Baal-gad,** *lord of fortune*, or good luck, prob. mod. *Pancas*. (18) **a long time,** five years, some say seven. (19) **save the Hivites,** ix. 3. (20) **harden their hearts,** comp. Ex. iv. 21.

Joshua a type of Christ.—1. Joshua and Jesus same name: in Acts vii. 45, and Heb. iv. 8, "Jesus" means not Christ, but Joshua. 2. Joshua completed what Moses began. So Jesus. John i. 17; Gal. iii. 24. 3. Joshua the leader and captain. So Jesus, Isa. lv. 4; Heb. ii. 10. 4. Joshua conquered Israel's enemies. So Jesus ours, Heb. ii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, 57. 5. Joshua gave Israel the promised land. So Jesus to us, John x. 28, xiv. 2, xvii. 24.

Of all bad things war is the worst.—

"How, still, from age to age,
Prevails the universal lust of death
And vulgar slaughter; war of all bad things
Worst, and man's crowning crime, save when for faith
Or freedom waged; but when for greed of ground
Or mere dominion, cursed of man and God.
As when the clans Mogul—which late had left
Their maze of mountains the high plains that bound—
Whence Buzanghir and all his valorous brood,
Heads of the golden horde, and sons of light,
Whom Alancova to her sun-spouse bare
At treble-birth: the lords of throne and crown,
Khalph's, or King's, or Tzar's, which Zinghis gained,
Or filial Kublai, with all-suasive sword,
Bright ravisher of souls, into one realm
Rounded and died."[b]

the Anakims are cut off

21—23. (21) **Anakims,**[a] gigantic race of S. Palestine, De. i. 28. **Hebron,** x. 3. **Debir,** x. 38. **Anab,** a city in hill country of Judah, S. of Hebron. (22) **Gaza, Gath, Ashdod,**[b] cities of district of Philistia. (23) **gave it,**[c] *etc.*, as hereafter recounted.

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of ourselves standing on higher ground, and, in virtue of his wider intelligence, his nobler thoughts, his loftier character, his purer inspiration, or his more manly doing, claiming the empire as his right."—*Ferguson.*

"Ambition, thou powerful source of good and ill."—*Young.*

b *Dr. Cumming.*

a "Prob. identical with the '*ascent of Akrabbim*' (Jos. xv. 3; Nu. xxxiv. 4), which Robinson believes he has discovered in a remarkable line of cliffs that run across the entire Ghor, a few miles S. of the Dead Sea."—*Lange.*

v. 20. *T. Bradbury, Ss.* ii. 75.

b *Bailey.*

"A slave has but one master: the ambitious man has as many masters as there are persons whose aid may contribute to the advancement of his fortunes."—*La Bruyère.*

a Nu. xiii. 22, 28, 33; De. i. 23;

The conquest and partition of Canaan (*v.* 23).—I. The conquest of the land. Note the analogy between the warfare of the Israelites, and that which is maintained by every true Christian. Mark their warfare in its various stages. 1. Its commencement; 2. Its progress; 3. Its completion. II. The partition of it. Mark here the order of events. 1. The grant; 2. The acquisition; 3. The enjoyment. Learn the issue of—(1) The world's impieties; (2) The saint's conflicts.

The desolation caused by war.—

"Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
Unpruned dies: her hedges even-pleach'd,
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,
Put forth disorder'd twigs: her fallow leas
The darnel hemlock, and rank fumitory,
Doth root upon; while that the coulter rusts,
That should deracinate such savagery:
The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth
The freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover,
Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank,
Conceives by idleness; and nothing teems
But hateful docks, rough thistles, keckxises, burs,
Losing both beauty and utility.
And as our vineyards, fallows, meads, and hedges,
Defective in their natures, grow to wildness."[e]

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

B.C. 1450.

Jos. xiv. 12, xv. 13–15.

1—3. (1) **other side,** E. side of Jordan. **Arnon,** Nu. xxi. 13—15. Southern border of Is. territory E. of Jordan. **Hermon,** boundary on N.E. De. iii. 8, 9. **plain,** *etc.*, tract of Jordan valley on E. bank. (2) **Sihon,** *etc.*, Nu. xxi. 21—30. **Aroer,** De. ii. 36. **middle of the river,** or, "city that is in the midst of the river,"[a] *i.e.* built partly on an island in the river. **Gilead,** prop. mountain region bet. *Arnon* and *Jabbok*, but sometimes put for whole district E. of Jordan. (3) **from the plain,**[b] *over the plain*, *i.e.* the E. portion of the *Ghor*. **Beth-jeshimoth,** Nu. xxxiii. 49. **Ashdoth-pisgah,** De. iii. 17, iv. 49.

War illustrated.—A Scotch writer, in illustrating the history of wars, says: "The history of every war is very like a scene I once saw in Nithsdale. Two boys from different schools met one fine day upon the ice. They eyed each other with rather jealous and indignant looks, and with defiance on each brow. 'What are ye glowrin' at, Billy?' 'What's that to you! I'll look where I have a mind, an' hinder me if you daur.' A hearty blow was the return to this, and then a battle began. It being Saturday, all the boys of both schools were on the ice; and the fight instantly became general and desperate. I asked one of the party what they were pelting the others for. 'Oh, naething at a' man: we just want to gie them a good thrashing.' After fighting till they were quite exhausted, one of the principal heroes stepped forth between, covered with blood, and his clothes in tatters, and addressed the belligerent parties thus: 'Weel, I'll tell ye what we'll do wi' ye: if ye'll let us alane, we'll let ye alane.' There was no more of it: the war was at an end, and the boys scampered away to their play. I thought at the time, and have

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list of conquered kings of Canaan

Sihon

a Spk. Com.

b De. iii. 17; Ez. xxv. 9.

v. 23. *R. P. Buddicom, Christ. Exod.* ii. 417.

c Nu. xxvi. 52, 53, xxxiv. 2—13; De. xxxiv. 1—4; He. iv. 8, 9.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." — *Shakespeare.*

"War is the sink of all injustice." —*Fielding.*

e Shakespeare.

"All our endeavours after greatness proceed from nothing but a desire of being surrounded by a multitude of persons and affairs that may hinder us from looking into ourselves, which is a view we cannot bear."—*Paschal.*

"There is none made so great but he may both need the help and service, and stand in fear of the power and

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unkindness, even of the meanest of mortals." — *Seneca.*

often thought since, that that trivial affray was the best epitome of war in general that I have ever seen. Kings and ministers of state are just a set of grown-up children, exactly like the children I speak of, with only this material difference, that instead of fighting out the needless quarrels they have raised, they sit in safety and look on, send out their innocent but servile subjects to battle, and then, after a waste of blood and treasure, are glad to make the boy's conditions, 'If ye'll let us alane, we'll let ye alane.'"

Og, King of Bashan

a De. i. 4, iii. 4—13.

"Mount Halak was in the parallel of Beersheba, and Baal-gad is identical with Banais, four miles east of Dan. These, then, were the limits of what we call 'the land of possession.' The 'land of promise' was much larger."—*Dr. Porter.*

b J. Ayre, M.A.

supplementary list of conquered kings

a Rosenmuller.

b Jos. xvii. 11.

c Robinson.

d 1 Ki. xiv. 17; xv. 21, 33; S. S. vi. 4.

"Edward, the Black Prince, having conquered and taken prisoner King John of France, nobly condescended to wait on his royal captive the same night at supper. Christ, having first subdued His people by His grace waits on them afterwards to the end of their lives."—*Whitecross.*

4—8. (4) **Ashtaroth,**[a] prob. as Ge. xiv. 5. **Edrei,** Nu. xxi. 33. (5) **Salcah,** De. iii. 10. **Geshurites, Maachathites,** De. iii. 14. **half Gilead,** comp. *v.* 2. (6) Comp. Nu. xxxii. 29; De. iii. 12, 13. (7) **Baal-gad . . Halak,** Jos. x. 17. (8) Comp. Jos. xi. 16.

Ashtaroth.—Statues of Astarte—a city probably so called from the worship of Astarte here. It was one of the chief places in the dominions of King *Og*, and was afterwards in the territory of the Eastern Manassites (Jos. ix. 10, xii. 12—31). It is said to have been assigned to the Gershonite Levites (1 Chron. vi. 71); but elsewhere (Jos. xxi. 27) Beeshterah is mentioned: this, however, is probably only a variation of the name. Ashtaroth is also called Astaroth (De. i. 4). *Ashteroth-Karnaim*—Ashteroth of the two horns; horned Astarte—a place which was the abode of the Rephaim in the time of Chedor-laomer (Ge. xiv. 5), is often supposed to be identical with Ashtaroth; but there are reasons for questioning this. Ashteroth-Karnaim is doubtless the Carnaim, or Carnion, of Maccabean history.[b]

9—24. The list of kings is given in the order of their conquest; the *fresh* names only need be noticed. (13) **Geder,** mod. Jedur, Jos. xv. 58; 1 Chr. xii. 7; situate in hill district S. of Judah. (15) **Adullam,** Ge. xxxviii. 1 (not same as in 1 Sa. xxii. 1). (17) **Tappuah,** xv. 34. **Hepher,** unknown (not as in xix. 13). (18) **Aphek,** near Hebron. **Lasharon,** prob. *Sharon.*[a] (21) **Taanach,** in tribe of Manasseh. **Megiddo,** locally in territory of Issachar, but assigned to Manasseh.[b] (22) **Kedesh,** or *Kedesh-Naphtali,* xix. 37. **Jokneam,** in territory of Zebulon. xix. 11. mod. *Kaimon.*[c] (24) **Tirzah,** mod. *Tullunzah,* 3 miles N.E. of Nablous.[d]

Christ the best King.—At a missionary meeting on the island of Rarotonga, one of the Hervey group in the Pacific Ocean, an old man, a candidate for church fellowship, said, "I have lived during the reign of four kings: in the first we were continually at war, and a fearful season it was; watching and hiding with fear were all our engagements. During the reign of the second we were overtaken with a severe famine, and all expected to perish; then we ate rats and grass, and this wood and that wood. During the third we were conquered, and became the peck and prey of the two other settlements of the island; then if a man went to fish he rarely ever returned, or if a woman went any distance to fetch food she was rarely ever seen again. But during the reign of this third king we were visited by another King, a great King, a good King, a powerful King, a King of love, Jesus the Lord from heaven. He has gained the victory. He has conquered our hearts; therefore we now have peace and plenty in this world, and hope soon to dwell with Him in heaven."

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

B.C. 1445.

1—6. (1) **old,** prob. over 100 years: not able to complete his conquest, so bidden to proceed to division of land at once. **remaineth . . possessed,** ere God's covenant-promise of the land was fulfilled. (2) **borders,** territory. **Geshuri,** a district S. of Philistia. (3) **Sihor,** or *Shihor,*[a] the black stream; not the Nile; known now as the Wady El-Arish, Nu. xxxiv. 5. **Ekron,** one of five divisions of Philistia, named after chief towns, Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, Gath, and Ekron. **Avites,**[b] add first sentence of *v.* 4. *Avites on the south,* where they settled. (4) **Canaanites,** the mountainous district of Upper Galilee. **Mearah,** cave, or the cave-district. **Aphek,** as xix. 30, not as xii: 18, mod. *Afka.* (5) **Giblites,** people of *Gebal,* 40 miles N. of Sidon.[c] **Hamath,** Nu. xiii. 21. (6) **Misrephoth,** xi. 8.

Progress in religion (*v.* 1).—I am come—I. To remind you that there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed: much of your religion is unattained, unoccupied, unenjoyed. Take a survey of your religion. Consider—1. Your knowledge; 2. Your holiness; 3. Your privileges. II. To call upon you to arise, and make fresh and continued progress. And here I would place before you—1. The commands of God; 2. The images employed by the sacred writers, when they would describe the nature of a religious life; 3. Examples: these teach the same truths; 4. The advantages of progressive religion. A Christian should be concerned for—(1) The honour of God; (2) The welfare of his fellow-creatures; (3) His own prosperity. III. To give you some advice with regard to your future efforts. If you would advance—1. Shake off indolence; 2. Beware of diversion; 3. Guard against despondency; 4. Be afraid of presumption; 5. Review the beginning of your religious course; 6. Look forward, and survey the close of all.[d]

Laws of progress.—Gradual ascent is as necessary to the mind in order to its reaching a great idea, as it is to the body in order to its reaching a great height. We cannot ascend to the pinnacle of a cathedral, which towers aloft in air, without either steps or an inclined plane. We cannot reach the summit of a mountain without first toiling up its base, then traversing its breast, and then successively crossing the limits were verdure passes into crag, and crag into a wilderness of snow. Even when we have gained the highest point, we are still, it is true, at an infinite distance from the blue vault of the firmament which stretches above our heads. Still we have a better and more exalted view of what that firmament is: we have at least risen above the fogs and mists which obscure its glory; and the air which encompasses us is transparent to the eye, and invigorating to the frame. Now, the law of man's bodily progress is also the law of his mental progress. Both must be gradual. No grand idea can be realised except by successive steps and stages, which the mind must use as landing-places in its ascent.[e]

7—14. (7) **divide,** even the yet unconquered parts; he was to do it in faith. (8) **with whom,** *i.e.* the other half tribe of Manassch. (9) **Medeba . . Dibon,** Nu. xxi. 20. (10, 11) *See*

land yet to be possessed

a "The brook of Eg.-Rhinokolura, flows *before, i.e.* eastwardly or north-eastwardly, fr. Eg., while the Nile takes its course through the middle of that country."—*Lange.*

b Jos. xviii. 23.

c 1 Ki. v. 18, Eze. xxvii. 9.

d W. Jay.

"Multitudes feel under the sermons they hear, even weep at the sufferings of Jesus, and yet remain in their sins. Why? Because the emotion is simply a natural one, what they might experience in thinking of the execution of Sir Thomas More, or the beheading of Lord William Russell—human sympathy with human suffering, and nothing more; it is purely religious sentimentality, wanting the inspiration of the Spirit, and destitute of any baptism from on high." —*Rev. Henry Gill.*

We do not get forward ourselves by keeping others back.

e Dr. Goulburn.

inheritance of two tribes and a half

B.C. 1445.

"If a king should promise one a living whilst he lived, it would lessen his carefulness for earthly things. How much more should God's promise make us careless for worldly things, seeing He is the King of all kings!" — *Cuvedray.*

Christ will first make you a "partaker of the Divine nature" in union with Himself before He will admit you into communion with Himself.

"He only is advanced in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace."—*Ruskin.*

a Dr. Caird.

inheritance of Reuben

Balaam slain

v. 15. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iii. 200
v. 23. *R. W. Dibdin, M.A., Ss.* 28.
"Yes, there's a patent of nobility above the meanness of our common state; with what they *do* the vulgar natures buy their titles, and with what they *are*, the *great*"—*Schiller.*

"The rank is but the guinea stamp —the man's the gowd for a' that." —*Burns.*

"Every step of progress which the world has

xii. 2, 3. (12, 13) *See* xii. 4, 5, 6. (14) **none inheritance,** on arrangement for Levites, De. x. 8, 9, xviii. 3.

A conquered world the Church's spoil (*vv.* 7, 8).—I. As Canaan had to be conquered by Israel and occupied: so the Church of Christ has to conquer and occupy the world. II. The choice things of the conquered land became available for the higher uses of the people of God, were no longer devoted to idolatry, etc. Presently the world's learning and wealth, etc., will be rescued from their lower uses, and employed in the service of God.

God is our portion.—To have a portion in God is to possess that which includes in itself all created good. The man who is in possession of some great masterpiece in painting or sculpture need not envy others who have only casts or copies of it. The original plate or stereotype is more valuable than any impressions or engravings thrown off from it; and he who owns the former owns that which includes, is capable of producing, all the latter. . . . Surveying the wonders of creation, or even with the word of inspiration in his hand, the Christian can say, "Glorious though these things be, to me belongs that which is more glorious far. The streams are precious, but I have the Fountain; the vesture is beautiful, but the Weaver is mine; the portrait in its every lineament is lovely, but that great Original, whose beauty it but feebly depicts, is mine, my own. 'God is my portion; the Lord is mine inheritance.' To me belongs all actual and all possible good, all created and uncreated beauty, all that eye hath seen or imagination conceived: and more than that; for eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love Him. All things and beings, all that life reveals or death conceals, everything within the boundless possibilities of creating wisdom and power is mine; for God, the Creator and Fountain of all, is mine."[a]

15—23. The southern part of territory E. of Jordan was allotted to Reuben, middle part to Gad, and northern part to Manasseh. For all three the Jordan valley formed the W. border. Arnon was boundary on S., Mount Hermon boundary on N. (17) **Bamoth-baal,** Nu. xxi. 19. **Beth-baal-meon,** Nu. xxxii. 38; these names of Amorite occupation. (18) **Jahaza,** Nu. xxi. 23. **Kedemoth,** De. ii. 26. **Mephaath,** Jos. xxi. 37. (19) **Kirjathaim,** *etc.*, Nu. xxxii. 37, 38. **Zareth-Shahar,** unknown. (20) **Beth-peor,** Nu. xxiii. 28. **Ashdoth,** De. iii. 17. **Beth-jeshimoth,** Nu. xxxiii. 49. (21) **Evi,** *etc.*, Nu. xxxi. 8. **dukes,** or vassals. (22) **Balaam,** Nu. xxxi. 8. (23) **border,** used in two senses in *v.*, for boundary, and for territory.

Spreading titles.—We have in the midst of us a human being, subject to like passions as ourselves, who is Duke of Wellington, Marquis of Douro, Marquis and Earl of Wellington, and Baron Douro in the peerage of the United Kingdom. He is First Magistrate, Master of the Morals, Keeper of the Rolls of a county which includes London; he has the appointment of other magistrates and large patronage in his gift. He is Earl of Mornington, Viscount Wellesley, and Baron Mornington in the peerage of Ireland, where the love of lords is a consuming passion. He is Prince of Waterloo in the Netherlands; Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo, and a grandee of the first class in Spain; **Duke of**

Vittoria, Marquis of Torres Vedras, and Count of Vimiera in Portugal; also a Count of Austria. He is owner of Straithfield-saye and Aspley House, patron of five churches, and has an hereditary pension of £5,000 a year beside all these things. This irresistible Polyarch has wronged no man. He has never on one occasion put forth his strength for an evil purpose. Let us think of this with admiration.[a]

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made has been from scaffold to scaffold, and from stake to stake."—*Wendell Phillips.*

a Vanity Fair.

24—28. (25) **Jazer,** Nu. xxi. 32. **Gilead,** as distinguished fr. Bashan. **Aroer,** not same as *v.* 16. **Rabbah,** De. iii. 11. (26) **Ramath-mizpeh,** = *Ramoth-Gilead,*[a] De. iv. 43. **Betonim,** unknown. **Mahanaim,** Ge. xxxii. 2, 3. (27) **Beth-aram,** comp. Nu. xxxii. 36. **Succoth,** Ge. xxxiii. 17. **Chinnereth,**= *Gennesaret,* which border of Gad just touched. (28) **villages,** indic. that some of prev. names apply to small places.

The rights and duties of property.—Those whose fortune it is to possess land and rank in this country cannot be too often or too earnestly reminded of the fact that the possession of such advantages constitutes, in every case whatever, a retaining fee on the part of the nation. Neither God, nor nature, nor society, contemplates the existence of an idler as that which ought to be. The country gentleman, the peer, and the prince, have their professions fixed on them: let them surrender the fee if they mean to shrink from the work; let the sinecure be a sine-salary. The mighty majority must, in all times and places, earn their living literally by the sweat of their brow, and the only principle on which any are exempted from the literal application of the great primary condition of our human existence is, that there are services essential to the intellectual, moral, political, and religious well-being and advancement of the whole, as a whole, which could not be effectually secured for them were not some exempted. The question is not whether a great man can afford services of plate and regiments of footmen, but whether any man is entitled to consume the produce of the English soil without discharging the duties which his station imposes on him to the English people.[b]

inheritance of Gad

a Jos. xx. 8.

"Property communicates a charm to whatever is the object of it. It is the first of our abstract ideas: it cleaves to us the closest and the longest. It endears to the child its plaything, to the peasant his cottage, to the landholder his estate. It supplies the place of prospect and scenery. Instead of coveting the beauty of distant situations, it teaches every man to find it in his own. It gives boldness and grandeur to plains and fens, tinge and colouring to clays and fallows."—*Paley.*

b Washington Irving.

29—33. (30) **Bashan,** northern part of country E. of Jordan. **towns of Jair,** Nu. xxxii. 41. (31) **Machir,** Nu. xxxii. 39; one half of his family settled W. of Jordan. (32) **by Jericho,** over opposite Jer. (33) **the Lord God,** *etc.*, as Nu. xviii. 20.

inheritance of half tribe of Manasseh

God for all.—No one claims propriety in the ocean to the exclusion of others. It is for all nations and people to use for their interests; nor is there any fear of exhausting its resources, were the whole world of humanity to make draughts upon it. It rolls its waves against every shore, and sends its tides into every land, as if to invite the inhabitants to her riches and facilities, and as if to show she was the property of all. So with the living God. No man can claim Him to the shutting out of others. He is the God of all; for their knowledge, their love, their obedience, their felicity; and should every intelligent being on the earth draw from His treasury of good to the endless satisfaction of his nature, there would still be an infinite plenitude left. And to convince all that He is then God, He gives to all life, breath, and all things. He fans them with His

Levi

v. 33. Dr. R. Eyre, S., Sons of the Clergy.

"The goodness of the Essence of God is that according to which it is essentially in itself the Supreme and very good; from a participation in which all other things have an existence and are good; and to which all other things are to be referred as to their supreme

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end; for this reason it is called "communicable" (Matt. xix. 17; Jas. i. 17; 1 Cor. x. 31).—*Arminius.*

a J. Bate.

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the inheritance of nine tribes and a half to be decided by lot

a Ex. vi. 23–25, xxviii. 1; Nu. iii. 32, xx. 28, xxvi. 1, xxvii. 18—23.

b "Not told in what manner the lot was cast. Perhaps two urns were employed, one containing a descrip. of the several districts to be allotted, the other the names of the tribes, and portion of each tribe would then be determined by a simultaneous drawing from the two urns."—*Spk. Comm.*

c Spencer.

d Beecher.

Caleb claims his inheritance

a Jos. iv. 19, 20. *b* 1 Sa. vii. 16, x. 8, xi. 14, 15, etc. *c* "The spot on wh. Caleb set his heart was the fertile valley of Hebron,.. there was the cave of Machpelah. . . . it was a winding valley, whose terraces were covered with the rich verdure and golden clusters of the Syrian vine, so rarely seen in Egypt,

influence; draws them by His love; sends hosts of holy agents to bring them to Himself. By ten thousand attractions of love and mercy He invites the world to plunge in His fulness and be satisfied.*a*

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **Eleazar,***a* third son of Aaron, placed at head of Levites after death of his brothers Nadab and Abihu. (2) **by lot,***b* Nu. xxvi. 52—56, xxxiii. 54. (3) **had given,** before the crossing of Jordan, so they had no part in this *lot.* (4) **two tribes,** this is said to explain the number, *nine and a half,* for which settlement in Canaan was to be provided. Omitting Levi, Reuben, and Gad, etc., only eight and a half would be left, but Joseph reckoned as two, Ephraim and Manasseh.

God all in all.—King Porus, when Alexander asked him, being then his prisoner, how he would be used, answered in one word, *Basilikeios;* that is, "Like a king." Alexander again replying, "Do you desire nothing else?" "No," said he: "all things are in this one word, 'Like a king.'" Whereupon Alexander restored him again. But this has not always been the happiness of kings and princes. Yet he that hath God hath all things, because God is all things. Take a pen, and write down riches, honours, preferments, they are but as so many ciphers; they signify nothing: but write down God alone, and He will raise them to thousands, hundreds of thousands. And then it is that a Christian is truly happy,—when he can find himself and all things in his God.*c*—*God for all.*—The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lowly pine on the mountain top waves its sombre boughs, and cries, "Thou art my sun;" and the little meadow-violet lifts its cup of blue, and whispers with its perfumed breath, "Thou art my sun;" and the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind, and makes answer, "Thou art my sun." So God sits effulgent in heaven not for a favoured few but for the universe of life; and there is no creature so poor or so low that he may not look up with childlike confidence, and say, "My Father, Thou art mine."*d*

6—9. (6) **in Gilgal,***a* still settlement of the camp, and for some time the sanctuary.*b* **Caleb,** Nu. xiii. 6. **thing that the Lord said,** Nu. xiv. 24; De. i. 36. **Kadesh-barnea,** Nu. xiii. 26. (7) **espy out the land,** Nu. xiii. 6, 17—33. (8) **brethren,** all his fellow-spies, except Joshua. **melt,** by a discouraging report. (9) **the land,** *etc.,*[c] prob. the bunch of grapes brought back was fr. this district. **wholly followed,** kept faith, and energetically urged obed. to God.

The request of Caleb (*vv.* 6—14).—We commend this address of Caleb to your consideration—I. Because it contains a grateful review of the past. Caleb recalls—1. The ancient promise of God; 2. His own faithfulness amid trying and degenerate times; 3. That there is another linked with him—Joshua—in a common work, a common character, and a common promise. II. Because it evinces a due estimate of the present. Caleb here—1. Asserts his condition; 2. Makes good his claim. III. Because it contains a hopeful survey of the future.

Religion in old age.—"I am on the bright side of seventy," said an aged man of God; "the bright side, because nearer to everlasting glory." "Nature fails," said another, "but I am happy." "My work is done," said the Countess of Huntingdon, when eighty-four years old: "I have nothing to do but to go to my Father." To a humble Christian it was remarked, "I fear you are near another world." "Fear it, sir!" he replied, "I know I am; but, blessed be the Lord! I do not fear it: I hope it."

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so beautiful a vesture of the bare hills of Palestine."—*Stanley.* "I am suffocated and lost when I have not the bright feeling of progression?"—*Margaret Fuller.*

10–12. (10) **forty and five years,** the promise was made in autumn of second year after the Exodus. This calculation makes Joshua seven years subduing Canaan.[a] (11) **as strong,** no symptom of enfeebling old age. (12) **this mountain,** the hill district round Hebron, where the spies had seen the Anakim. Caleb had not been frightened out of faith by the sight, so he asked to be the one to subdue them, Nu. xiii. 28—33.[b]

Caleb's reflection on the goodness and faithfulness of God to him (*v.* 10).—Consider, as suggested by the text, that—I. It is God that keepeth us alive. We are apt to forget and neglect the due improvement of this fact. II. The aged have peculiar reason to make this acknowledgment. Like Caleb, they have been wandering in a wilderness, they have seen all their early companions die. III. It is a great satisfaction to aged saints to reflect on their obedience to God, and the accomplishment of His promises to them. IV. The experience which aged saints have had of God's goodness and faithfulness is a strong encouragement to them to hope and trust in Him.[c]

Growing old.—A person being in company with some of his gay acquaintance, one of them observed to him that his hair began to be sprinkled with grey. "I wish you had not made that remark," replied he, "as it puts me in mind of my growing old; a subject of which I cannot bear to think. I had rather be the most miserable hackhorse in this world than be an angel in heaven." How dreadful must have been the testimony of this man's conscience! Alas, why should he not have sought that pardon which gives peace of conscience, and enables the Christian to desire to depart, that he may be with Christ!

a Jos. xi. 17.

b The Anakim had been expelled by Jos., but had only withdrawn to Philistia. Thence they had, as must be inferred from the text here, returned and reoccupied Hebron."—*Spk. Comm.*

"I have been twenty years in the ministry of the Gospel, and I do not believe I could enumerate three persons over fifty years of age whom I have heard ask the solemn question, 'What shall I do to be saved?'"—*Dr. Bedell.*

c *Job Orton.*

13–15. (13) **blessed him,** publicly acknowledging his bravery and faith. (14) **unto this day,** time when history of Jos. was completed. (15) **Kirjath-arba,** reason to think Caleb only restored orig. name, the one familiar to the patriarchs. Ge. xxiii. 2. **had rest,** no other combined and active resistance was at this time made.

Religion in old age.—

Behold a patriarch of years, who leaneth on the staff of religion;
His heart is fresh, quick to feel, a bursting fount of generosity;
He, playful in his wisdom, is gladdened in his children's gladness;
He, pure in his experience, loveth in his son's first love:
Lofty aspirations, deep affections, holy hopes, are his delight;
His abhorrence is to strip from life its charitable garment of ideal.
The shrewd world laughed at him for honesty, the vain world mouthed at him for honour.

Hebron is given to him.

"One's age should be tranquil as one's childhood should be playful; hard work, at either extremity of human existence seems to me out of place: the morning and the evening should be alike cool and peaceful; at mid-day the sun may burn, and men may labour under it."—*Dr. Arnold.*

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The false world hated him for truth, the cold world despised him for affection.
Still he kept his treasure, the warm and noble heart,
And in that happy old man survive the child and lover.[a]

[a] *M. Tupper.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

Inheritance of Judah

a Spk. Comm.

1—6. (1) **the lot,** a description of the boundaries of the lot. **Edom,** Nu. xxxiv. 3. **Zin,** Nu. x. 12. (2) **bay,** *etc.*, tongue, the southern shallow end of Dead Sea. (3) Comp. Nu. xxxiv. 3, 4. **Karkaa,** not otherwise mentioned. (4) **river of Egypt,** *Wady-el-Arish.* (5) **end of Jordan,** where it falls into Dead Sea. **bay of the sea,** northern end. (6) **Beth-hogla,** poss. threshing floor of Atad, Ge. l—10, 11.[a] **Beth-arabah,** comp. v. 61, xviii. 22. **stone of Bohan,** comp. xviii. 17.

The mountain region of Palestine.—The mountainous parts of the Holy Land are so far from being inhospitable, unfruitful, or the refuse of the land of Canaan, that in the division of this country the mountain of Hebron was granted to Caleb as a particular favour: "Now, therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spake in that day." In the time of Asa, the "hill country of Judah" mustered five hundred and eighty thousand men of valour; an argument beyond dispute that the land was able to maintain them. Even in the present times, though cultivation and improvement are exceedingly neglected, while the plains and valleys, although as fruitful as ever, lie almost entirely desolate, every little hill is crowded with inhabitants. If this part of the Holy Land was composed, as some object, only of naked rocks and precipices, why is it better peopled than the plains of Esdraelon, Rama, Acre, or Zabulon, which are all of them extremely fertile and delightful? It cannot be urged that the inhabitants live with more safety on the hills and mountains than on the plains, as there are neither walls nor fortifications to secure their villages and encampments; and except in the range of Lebanon, and some other mountains, few or no places of difficult access; so that both of them are equally exposed to the insults of an enemy. But the reason is obvious; they find among these mountainous rocks and precipices, sufficient convenience for themselves, and much greater for their cattle. Here they have bread to the full, while their flocks and herds browse upon richer herbage, and both man and beast quench their thirst from springs of excellent water, which is but too much wanted, especially in the summer season, through all the plains of Syria.[b]

[a] "From St. Jerome we learn that a partic. part of this road was called the *red* or bloody way, so much blood had there been shed"—*Trench.*

[b] *Robinson.*

7—12. (7) **Debir,** not same as *v.* 15. **Achor,** vii. 26. **Gilgal,** iv. 19. **going up to Adummim,** ascent or pass on road fr. Jerus. to Jericho. name signifies *red.*[a] **river,** *Wady Kelt.*[b] **En-shemesh,** spring 2 miles fr. Jerus. **En-rogel,** in bed of Kidron, just below junction of valleys Hinnom and Jehoshaphat.[c] (8) **Hinnom,** ravine by Jerus., scene of idol. sacrifices.[d] (9) **Nephtoah,** mod. *Ain Lifta,* 2½ miles N.W. fr. Jerus. **Kirjath,** ix. 17. (10) **Seir,** not the range of Edom. **Beth-shemesh,** 1 Sa. vi. 10. **Timnah,** not same as in *v.* 57, or xix. 50, xxiv. 30. (11) **Ekron,** xiii. 3. **Jabneel,** 3 miles from coast, and 12 S. of Joppa.

[a] *Robinson.*

[b] *Thomson, Robinson.*

The fertility of the Holy Land.—This fertility of Canaan is fully confirmed by writers of great reputation, whose impartiality cannot be justly suspected. Tacitus calls it a fruitful soil, *uber solum;* and Justin affirms that in this country the purity of the air and the fertility of the soil are equally admirable: *Sed non minor loci ejus apricitatis quam ubertatis admiratio est.* The justice of these brief accounts, Dr. Shaw, and almost every modern traveller, fully verifies. When he travelled in Syria and Phœnicia, in December and January, the whole country, he remarks, looked verdant and cheerful; and the woods particularly, which are chiefly planted with the gall-bearing oak, were everywhere bestrewed with a variety of anemones, ranunculuses, colchicas, and mandrakes. Several pieces of ground near Tripoli were full of liquorice; and at the mouth of a famous grotto he saw an elegant species of the blue lily, the same with Morrison's *lilium Persicum florens.* In the beginning of March, the plains, particularly between Jaffa and Rama, were everywhere planted with a beautiful variety of fritillaries, tulips of innumerable hues, and a profusion of the rarest and most beautiful flowers; while the hills and the mountains were covered with yellow pollium, and some varieties of thyme, sage, and rosemary.[e]

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13—15. (13) **Arba,** *see* name of Hebron Kirjath-arba. (14) **Sheshai,** *etc.*, prob. names of 3 *families* of Anakim, not merely of individuals. (15) **Kirjath-sepher,** comp. *v.* 49, *book-city*, apparently a seat of learning.

Youth in age.—Be you young until you die, so far as energy, persistence, ambition, and augmentation of resources are concerned. There are some things that curl over easily in the autumn. Their leaves become sere and yellow, and fall to the ground before there are any signs of frost in the air. I do not like such vegetables; I do not have them in my garden. Others carry their green leaves clean down into freezing before they give up. These I like. And I like to see men that can look at God's frosts and not be blighted, but remain green and succulent and growing, even into the edges of winter.[a]

d 2 Chr. xxvii. 3, xxxiii. 6.

v. 7. "*En-rogel*, or the fuller's well; who hath his name in Hebrew from footing it, *quia pedibus mundet vestes.* So the talebearer hath" (Ps. xv. 3).—*Trapp.*

e Paxton.

"The labour of the body relieves us from the fatigues of the mind, and this it is which forms the happiness of the poor."—*Rochefoucauld.*

Caleb's portion and conquest

16—19. (16) The city was doubtless strongly situated and defended. (17) **brother,**[a] said of Othniel, son of Kenaz, = Kennizzite, so *Achsah* was his niece. (18) **came unto him,** removing from her father's house. **a field,** some well-known field, bec. of its abundant springs. **lighted off,** word used indic. suddenness and excitement. She herself would ask what she could not persuade her husband to. (19) **south land,** so likely to be dry. **upper . . nether,** that is, a sloping district with springs on the higher and lower levels.

v. 14. *Caleb drove,* "*Nos quoque militemus.* Heaven is not to be had *sine sanguine et sudore,* without pains, patience, violence."—*Trapp.*

a Beecher.

Caleb makes provision for his daughter

a Ju. i. 13.

vv. 16, 17. *Dr. J. Everard, Gospel Treasures,* 265.

b M. Henry.

"All brave men love; for he only is brave who has affections to fight for, whether in the daily battle of life or in physical contests."—*Hawthorn.*

"Wisdom without innocency is knavery; innocence without

Achsah's dowry (*v.* 19).—From this story we may learn—I. That a moderate desire for the comforts and conveniences of this life is no breach of the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." II. That mutual consultation and joint agreement between husbands and wives is the surest omen of success. III. That parents should never think that lost which is bestowed upon their children for their advantage.[b]

The request of Achsah.—After surveying the exterior of the mosque (of Hebron), we rode over the hills south of Hebron to visit the probable scene of the romantic transaction between

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wisdom is folly; be therefore as wise as serpents and innocent as doves. The subtilty of the serpent instructs the innocency of the dove; the innocency of the dove corrects the subtilty of the serpent. What God hath joined together let not man separate."—*Quarles.*

c *Stanley.*

"Some men so dislike the dust kicked up by the generation they belong to, that, being unable to pass, they lag behind it."—*Hare.*

the cities of Judah

a 2 Sa. xxiii. 30.

b "This name is omitted in some editions of the LXX., and may have been interpolated fr. *v.* 55."—*Spk. Comm.*

c *Knobel, Wilton.*

d Home of Judas, Mat. x. 4.

e 1 Chr. iv. 28; Ne. xi. 27.

"I bless God for cities. Cities have been as lamps of life along the pathway of humanity and religion. Within them science has given birth to her noblest discoveries. Behind their walls freedom has fought her noblest battles. They have stood on the surface of the earth like great breakwaters, rolling back or turning aside the swelling tide of oppression. Cities, indeed, have been the cradles of human liberty. They have been

Caleb and his daughter Achsah. A wide valley, unusually green, amidst the barren hills of the "south country" suddenly breaks down into an almost precipitous and still greener ravine. On the south side of this ravine is a village called Dura, possibly the Adoraim of the Book of Chronicles (2 Chron. xi. 9); on the north, at the summit of a steeper and more rugged ascent, is Dewir Dan, which recalls the name of Debir, the fortress which Othniel stormed on the condition of winning Achsah for his bride. "Give me," she said to her father, as she rode on her ass beside him, "a field"—"a blessing"—a rich field, such as that which lies spread in the green basin which she and Caleb would first encounter in their ride from Hebron. "For thou hast given me a south land"—these dry, rocky hills which extend as far as the eye can reach, till they melt into the hazy platform of the desert. "Give me also the 'bubblings' (*gulloth*) of water, the upper and the lower bubblings." It is an expressive word, which seems to be used for "tumbling, falling, waves," and is thus especially applicable to the rare sight of the clear rivulet that, rising in the green meadow above mentioned (Ain Nunkar), falls and flows continuously down to the bottom of the ravine, and by its upper and nether streams gives verdure to the whole. The identification is not, perhaps, absolutely certain, but the scene lends itself to the incident in every particular.[c]

20—29. The catalogue of cities is divided, according to natural features of the district, into those in the south; (Negeb) those in the lowland; those in the highlands; and those in the wilderness. (20) **inheritance,** possession. (21) Enumeration begins with E. of Negeb: places omitted in these notes are not identified. **Kabzeel,** birthplace of Benaiah.[a] (22) **Dimonah,** =*Dibon,* Ne. xi. 25. (23) **Kedesh,** Nu. xxxiv. 4. **Hazor,** prob. should be Hazor-Ithnan. (24) **Ziph,**[b] comp. *v.* 55. **Telem,** poss. *Telaim,* 1 Sa. xv. 4. **Bealoth,** = *Ramoth-Negeb,* the mod. *Kurnub.*[c] (25) **Hazor, Hadattah,** or New Hazor. **Kerioth-Hezron,** to be joined; word *Kerioth* indic. military occupation.[d] (26) **Shema,** xix. 2. **Moladah,** Ne. xi. 25, 26, mod. Malatha. (28) **Hazor-shual,** village of jackals, xix. 3.[e] **Beer-sheba,** Ge. xxi. 28—32. (29) **Baalah,** xix. 3. mod. *Deir-el-Belah,* near Gaza.

City life.—I dread nothing more than to hear young men saying, "I am going to the city." If they ask me, as they often do when I am travelling about the country, what chances there are for a lawyer in the city, I say, "Just the chance that a fly has on a spider's web; go down and be eaten up!" If they ask me what chances there are for a mechanic in the city, I say, "Good! good! there death carries on a wholesale and retail business! The mechanic art flourishes finely! Coffin-making is admirable! Men are dying ten times as fast as anywhere else!" If a man's bones are made of flint; if his muscles are made of leather; if he can work sixteen or eighteen hours a day and not wink, and then sleep scarcely winking; if, in other words, he is built for mere toughness, then he can go into the city, and go through the ordeal which business men and professional men are obliged to go through who succeed. The conditions of city life may be made healthy, so far as the physical constitution is concerned; but there is connected with the business of the city so much

competition, so much rivalry, so much necessity for industry, that I think it is a perpetual, chronic, wholesale violation of natural law. There are ten men that can succeed in the country, where there is one that can succeed in the city.*f*

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the active centres of almost all Church and State reformation."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

f Beecher.

30–40. (30) **Eltolad,**[a] xix. 4. **Chesil,** name of stars we call Orion, so prob. seat of idolatrous worship;[b] site 15 m. S.W. of Beersheba. **Hormah,** Nu. xiv. (31) **Ziklag,** 1 Sa. xxvii. 6. (32) **Ain Rimmon,** one name, Ne. xi. 29. 10 m. N. of Beersheba. (33) **valley,** lowlands, bounded S. by *Negeb*, N. by plain of *Sharon*, W. by Medit.. E. by highland district. **Eshtaol,** Ju. xiii. 25; **Zoreah,** Ju. xiii. 2. (34) **Enam,** Ge. xxxviii. 14. (35) **Jarmuth,** x. 3. **Adullam,** xii. 15. **Socoh,** 1 Sa. xvii. 1. **Azekah,** x. 10. (36) **Sharaim,** 1 Sa. xvii. 52. **Gederah,** xii. 13. (38) **Mizpeh,** xi. 3. (39) **Lachish,** *etc.*, x. 3.

Cities.—A city is in one respect like a high mountain; the latter is an epitome of the physical globe; but its sides are belted by products of every zone, from the tropical luxuriance that clusters around its base to its arctic summit far up in the sky. So is the city an epitome of the social world. All the belts of civilisation intersect along its avenues. It contains the products of every moral zone. It is cosmopolitan not only in a national but a spiritual sense.[c]

a 1 Chr. iv. 29.

b "Sozomen appears to be speaking of this place when he mentions a Bethel in the territory of Gaza, populous, and famous for an ancient and splendid temple, wh., he conjectures, gave to the place its name."—*Spk. Com.*

c Dr. Chapin.

41–47. (41) **Makkedah,** x. 10. (42) **Libnah,** x. 29. **Ether and Ashan,** xix. 7. (44) **Keilah,** 1 Sa. xxiii. 1, 5, 12. **Achzib,** Ge. xxxviii. 5. **Maresha,** 2 Chr. xiv. 9—13. (45) **Ekron.** (46) **Ashdod.** (47) **Gaza,** cities of Philistia. **river of Egypt,** *v.* 4.

Social and moral influence of cities.—If the history of cities and of their influence on their respective territories be deducted from the history of humanity, the narrative remaining would be, as we suspect, of no very attractive description. In such case, the kind of picture which human society must everywhere have presented would be such as we see in the condition, from the earliest time, of the wandering hordes of Mongolians and Tartars, spread over the vast flats of Central Asia. In those regions scarcely anything has been "made" by man. But this most happy circumstance, as it seems to be accounted, this total absence of anything reminding you of human skill and industry, has never been found to realise our poetic ideas of pastoral beauty and innocence. It has called forth enough of the squalid and of the ferocious, but little of the refined, the powerful, or the generous. If anything be certain, it would seem to be certain that man is constituted to realise his destiny from his association with man, more than from any contact with places. The great agency in calling forth his capabilities, whether for good or for evil, is that of his fellows. The picturesque, accordingly, may be with the country, but the intellectual, speaking generally, must be with the town. Agriculture may possess its science, and the farmer, as well as the landowner, may not be devoid of intelligence; but in such connections the science and intelligence, in common with the nourishment of the soil, must be derived, in the main, from the studies prosecuted in cities, and from the wealth realised in the traffic of cities. If pasturage is followed by tillage, and if tillage is made to partake of the nature of a study and a science, these signs of

"Our large trading cities bear to me very nearly the aspect of monastic establishments, in which the roar of the mill-wheel and the crane take the place of other devotional music, and in which the worship of mammon and Moloch is conducted with a tender reverence and an exact propriety; the merchant rising to his mammon matins with the self-denial of an anchorite, and expiating the frivolities into which he may be beguiled in the course of the day by late attendance at mammon vespers."—*Ruskin.*

"The most civilised people are as near to barbarism as the most polished steel is to rust. Nations, like metals, have only a superficial

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brilliancy."—*Rivarol.*

a Dr. R. Vaughan.

a Is. xxi. 2. "There is such a difference between the pursuits of men in great cities, that one part of the inhabitants lives to little other purpose than to wonder at the rest. Some have hopes and fears, wishes and aversions, which never enter into the thoughts of others; and inquiry is laboriously exerted to gain that which those who possess it are ready to throw away."—*Johnson.*

b Wordsworth.

the Jebusites

"General Providence is the general provision made in the properties and laws of both matter and mind for the accomplishment of His designs. It regards both matter and mind; not only as real existences, but as possessing inherent properties and laws, which, however, are not self-existent and self-sufficient, but require the upholding of sustaining power of God."—*Finney.*

a J. Ayre, M.A.

inheritance of Joseph

a "The united inheritance of the two tribes includes a fruitful and, for the improvement are peculiar to lands in which cities make their appearance, and they become progressive only as cities become opulent and powerful.*a*

48—57. (48) **mountains,** highland district bet. *Negeb* and *Jerusalem*, having the wilderness on the E. **Jattir,** xxi. 14. (49) **Kirjath-sannah,** x. 38. (50) **Anab,** xi. 21. **Eshtemoh,** xxi. 14. (52) **Dumah,***a* now *Daumeh*, near Hebron. (54) **Kirjath-arba,** x. 4. (55) **Maon,** 1 Sa. xxiii. 24. **Carmel,** as 1 Sa. xxv. 2; 2 Chr. xxvi. 10. (56) **Jezreel,** not the famous town of Ahab, but as 1 Sa. xxv. 43. (57) **Gibeah,** name often repeated.

The city in the early morning.—

The city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning . . . . . .
Never did sun more beautifully steep,
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill.
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep;
The river glideth at its own sweet will.
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still.*b*

58—63. (58) **Beth-zur,** 2 Chr. xi. 7: Ne. iii. 16. **Gedor,** now *Jedur*, bet. Jerus. and Gaza. (60) **Kirjath-baal,** ix. 17. (61) **wilderness,** extending from N. boundary of Judah along the shore of Dead Sea, to the *Negeb*, and bounded on W. by the highland district. **Beth-arabah,** *v.* 6. (62) **En-gedi,** Ge. xiv. 7. (63) **Jebusites,** inhabitants of Jerus. at time of invasion.

The Jebusites.—They were descended from Canaan the youngest son of Ham (Ge. x. 16), and are named last in the various catalogues, possibly because they were but a small clan, or occupied a circumscribed territory (xv. 21; Ex. iii. 8, 17). Their chief abodes were Jerusalem and the surrounding district, together with the mountain-country afterwards belonging to Judah; where they were near neighbours to the Amorites and the Hittites. Although defeated, and their king slain (Jos. x. 1, 5, 26) and their city subsequently burnt by the tribe of Judah (Jud. i. 8) it was not entirely destroyed; for we are told that the Benjamites to whom it was assigned (Jos. xviii. 28) could not clear it of its Jebusite occupants (Jud. i. 22, comp. with *v.* 63 above), and it appears to have afterwards had an exclusively Jebusite population (Jud. xix. 10—12). Indeed it was not till the reign of David that these were altogether conquered and dispossessed of the stronghold of Zion (2 Sam. v. 6—8; 1 Ch. ix. 4—6), and even still some of them remained (2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 18; 1 Ch. xxi. 15, 18, 28). Solomon made the remnant tributary (1 K. ix. 20), and some seem to have been recognisable after the captivity (Ezra ix. 1).*a*

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—4. (1) **Joseph,***a* includ. both *Ephraim* and *half Manasseh*. **water of Jericho,** *Ain-es-Sultan.*b **throughout mount Beth-el,** right up to. **Beth-el,** vii. 2. (2) **Luz,** Ge. xxviii. 19. **Archi,** or of the Archite.c **Ataroth,** *v.* 5, mod. *Atara.* (3) **Beth-horon,** x. 10. **Gezer,** x. 33.

Providence rightly places us.—Suppose the mole should cry, "How I could have honoured the Creator had I been allowed to fly!" it would be very foolish, for a mole flying would be a most ridiculous object; while a mole fashioning its tunnels and casting up its castles, is viewed with admiring wonder by the naturalist, who perceives its remarkable suitability to its sphere. The fish of the sea might say, "How could I display the wisdom of God if I could sing, or mount a tree like a bird;" but a dolphin in a tree would be a very grotesque affair, and there would be no wisdom of God to admire in trouts singing in the groves; but when the fish cuts the wave with agile fin, all who have observed it say how wonderfully it is adapted to its habitat, how exactly its every bone is fitted for its mode of life. Brother, it is just so with you. If you begin to say, "I cannot glorify God where I am, and as I am," I answer, neither could you anywhere if not where you are. Providence which arranged your surroundings, appointed them so that, all things being considered, you are in the position in which you can best display the wisdom and the grace of God.[d]

5—10. (5) Note precedence of Ephraim.[a] **the upper**, it was near the one in *v.* 3. (6) **on the north side**, northward. (7) **Naarath**, *see* 1 Chr. vii. 28; 5 miles from Jericho. (8) **Tappuah**, xii. 17, xvii. 7. **river Kanah**, the brook of reeds. mod. *Nahr-el-Kassah*, wh. flows into Medit. between Joppa and Cesarea. (9) **separate**, or single cities, additional ones, prob. because of the number of the tribe. (10) **drove not out**, neglecting the Divine command.[b]

Influence of companions.—It is said to be a property of the tree-frog, that it acquiries the colour of whatever it adheres to for a short time. Thus, when found on growing corn, it is commonly of a dark green; if found on the white oak, it has the colour peculiar to the tree. Just so it is with men: they generally resemble those with whom they associate.[c]—*An old law against bad companions.*—An ancient historian, mentioning the law which Charondas gave the Thurians, says, "He enacted a law with reference to an evil, on which former lawgivers had not animadverted,—that of keeping bad company. As he conceived that the morals of the good were sometimes quite ruined by their dissolute acquaintance, that vice was apt, like an infectious disease, to spread itself, and extend its contagion, he expressly enjoined that none should engage in any intimacy or familiarity with immoral persons; appointed that an accusation might be exhibited for keeping bad company; and laid a heavy fine on such as were convicted of it."[d]

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most part, pleasant country lying in the midst of western Palestine."—*Lange.*

b 2 Ki. ii. 19.

c 2 Sa. xv. 32. God's providences often resemble pieces of tapestry before they are put together; here is a head, there is a limb, yonder is a hand or a foot, or something else. When the whole is complete it is a perfect specimen of beauty.

d Spurgeon.

inheritance of Ephraim

a Ge. xlviii. 20.

b De. xx. 16.

"As one scabbed sheep infecteth many others, as a little poison infecteth a great deal of meat and drink, as a few sick of the plague may infect a whole house or town; even so the company of the wicked infecteth the godly, because there can be no concord between the sons of wisdom and the sons of folly."—*Cawdray.*

c Bibl. Treas.

d Dean Bolton.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

1—6. (1) **Machir**, Ge. i. 23. **man of war**, Nu. xxxii. 33. (2) **Abiezer**, Nu. xxvi. 29. (3) **Zelophehad**, Nu. xxvi. 33. **commanded Moses**, Nu. xxvii. 4, 8—11. (5) **ten portions**, male posterity branched into five families, the sixth son divided into five daughters, who took a portion each. (6) **land of Gilead**, across the Jordan.

Reliance on Providence.—To make our reliance upon Providence both pious and rational, we should, in every great enter-

inheritance of Manasseh

daughters of Zelophehad

"The decrees of Providence are inscrutable; in spite of man's short sighted endeavours to dispose of events

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according to his own wishes and his own purposes, there is an intelligence beyond his reason, which holds the scales of justice, and promotes his well-being, in spite of his puny efforts."—*Mortier.*

a South.

coast of Manasseh

a "The northern border is only indicated in general terms, perhaps because the Israelites were not yet completely masters of this part of the country, so had not precisely determined it."—*Spk. Com.*

God's special superintending providence puts an end to the idea of chance or mere accident. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

b Dr. Guthrie.

the children of Joseph claim more than their portion

a For spirit of this tribe of Joseph see Ju. viii. 1, xii. 1; 2 Sa. xix. 41; 2 Chr. xxviii. 9.

b G. Bush.

"The whole course and series of Divine providence towards the saints is like a music-book, in every leaf where of there is a song ready pricked for them, to learn and sing to the praise of their God; no passage of their life of prise we take in hand, prepare all things with that care, diligence, and activity, as if there were no such thing as Providence for us to depend upon; and again, when we have done all this, we should as wholly and humbly rely upon it as if we had made no preparations at all. And this is a rule of practice which will never fail, or shame any who shall venture all that they have and are upon it,—for as a man, by exerting his utmost force in any action or business, has all that human strength can do for him therein, so, in the next place, by quitting his confidence in the same, and placing it only in God, he is sure of all that Omnipotence can do in his behalf.*a*

7—13. (7) **En-tappuah,** xvi. 8. (8) Tappuah was one of the single cities referred to, xvi. 8. (9) **Kanah,** xvi. 8. **these cities,** names have been in some way omitted, or lost. The single cities of Ephraim were on the south side of the river; the territory on the N. side was wholly given to Manapeh. (10) **met together,** together reached unto.*a* (11) **Beth-shean,** 1 Sa. xxxi. 8. **Ibleam,** Ju. i. 27. **Dor,** xi. 2. **Taanach . . Megiddo,** xii. 21. (12) **could not,** indic. failing faith. (13) **tribute,** such subjection involved future perils.

Continuous Providence.—Providence has no Sabbath. No night suspends it; and from its labours God never rests. If I may compare small things with great, it is like the motion of the heart. Beating our march to the grave, since the day we began to live the heart has never ceased to beat. Our limbs may grow weary, not it. We sleep; it never sleeps. Needing no period of repose to recruit its strength, by night and day it throbs in every pulse; and constantly supplying nourishment to the meanest as well as the noblest organs of our frame, with measured, steady, untired stroke, it drives the blood along the bounding arteries, without any exercise of will on our part, and even when the consciousness of our own existence is lost in dreamless slumbers.*b*

14—18. (14) They expected two full lots: their complaint was unreasonable, seeing their numbers were not excessive; a portion of them settled E. of Jordan.*a* (15) Joshua bids them give proof of prowess by fully subduing and occupying the land they had got. **wood country,** they might clear it for occupation: prob. the range between Gilboa and Carmel. **Perizzites,** Ge. xiii. 7. **giants,** Ge. xiv. 5. (16) **chariots of iron,** like those of Egypt. Ex. xiv. 7. (17) **not have one lot,** bec. by driving out the Canaanites they might double it. (18) The limit of their lot is made to depend on their own prowess.

The petition of the children of Joseph (*vv.* 14, 16).—We may learn from this—I. How prone men are to be discontented with their lot. II. That our complaints of comforts withheld are often no more than testimonies of our own supineness, negligence, and fear of the cross.*b*

Chariots of iron.—The warriors of primitive times were carried to the field in chariots, drawn for the most part by two horses. The custom of riding and fighting upon horses was not introduced into Greece and the regions of Asia bordering on the Hellespont till some time after the Trojan war; for Homer, whose authority in such cases is indisputable, always conducts his heroes to battle in chariots, never on horseback. In what age

the chariot was first used in battle cannot now be ascertained; but by the help of the sacred volume, we can trace the practice to a very remote antiquity, for the aboriginal inhabitants of Canaan appear, from the number of armed chariots which they possessed, when Joshua invaded their country, to have been trained to that mode of warfare long before. "And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel." This by no means intimates that the chariots were made of iron, but only that they were armed with it. Such chariots were by the ancients called *currus falcati*, and in Greek ῥεπτανοφύρται. They had a kind of scythes, of about two cubits long, fastened to long axle-trees on both wheels; these being driven swiftly through a body of men made great slaughter, mowing them down like grass or corn. The efficacious resistance which the Canaanites, from their chariots of iron, opposed to the arms of Israel, is emphatically remarked by the sacred historian: "And the Lord was with Judah, and they drave out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." The native princes of Canaan, fully aware of the great advantages to be derived from this species of force in combating the armies of Israel, which consisted, as has already been observed, entirely of infantry, continued to improve it with a care and diligence proportioned to its importance. In the time of the judges, not long after the death of Joshua, Jabin the king of Canaan, sent nine hundred chariots of iron into the field against the people of Israel: and in a succeeding war, between this people and their inveterate enemies the Philistines, the latter met them in the field with "thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea-shore for multitude."[c]

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which they can say, 'In this I received no mercy for which I should bless God."—*Gurnall.*

"'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,' is the unvaried language of God in His providence. He will have credit at every step. He will not assign reasons, because He will exercise faith."—*Cecil.*

"All our progress is an unfolding, like the vegetable bud. You have first an instinct, then the opinion, then a knowledge, as the plant has root, bud, and fruit. Trust the instinct to the end, though you can render no reason."—*Emerson.*

c Paxton.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

tabernacle set up in Shiloh

rest of land described and divided

1—7. (1) **Shiloh,** Ju. xxi. 19, mod. *Seilun;*[a] tabernacle remained there some 300 years.[b] (2) **remained,** after arrangement for 2½ tribes E. of Jordan, and for other 2½ as ch. xv.—xvii. (3) **slack,** partial possession was followed by indifference, partly due to settlement of other tribes in their territories. (4) **each tribe,** of the 7 mentioned. **describe it,** numbering the cities and general features so that it might be fairly allotted. (5) **in their coast,** within their territories. (6) **describe . . parts,** they were to suggest the tribal divisions. (7) **no part,** xiii. 14.

a Robinson.

"It was 20 or 25 miles N. of Jerus., 12 miles N. of Bethel, 10 S. of Shechem, and embosomed in a rugged and romantic glen."—*Jamieson.*

Sloth and lukewarmness reproved (*v.* 3).—I. The force of the reproof as applied to the Israelites. They were reproved for—1. Indolence; 2. The undue satisfaction they took in their present comforts; 3. The light thoughts which they entertained of their promised inheritance. II. The justice of it as applied to ourselves. Consider how slack we are in—1. Reading the Scriptures; 2. Prayer; 3. The mortification of sin; 4. Pressing forward for the prize of our high calling. III. The considerations which are proper to stir us up to diligence. Consider—1. How much time

b 1 Sa. iv. 1—11; see also De. xii. 5.

v. 1. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 344.

v. 3. *R. P. Buddi-*

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com. Christ. Exod. ii. 413; *W. Buswell, Ss.* 228.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way."—*Bishop Berkeley.*

d Hughes.

you have lost already; 2. How your difficulties are increased by delay; 3. How certain is your success if ye advance in your work; 4. How richly heaven will compensate for all your labours.[c]

The true value of possession.—One's own—what a charm there is in the words! how long it takes boy and man to find out their worth! how fast most of us hold on to them! faster and more jealously the nearer we are to the general home, into which we can take nothing, but must go naked as we came into the world. When shall we learn that he who multiplieth possessions multiplieth troubles, and that the one single use of things which we call our own, is that they may be his who hath need of them?[d]

lots cast for land

8—10. (8) **charged them,** gave instructions. (9) **in a book,**[a] making an exact inventory. (10) **before the Lord,** prob. at door of tabernacle.

Providence towards the Church.—It is not the nations, but the Church, that God has cherished as the apple of His eye. The three great nationalities, Jewish, Greek, and Roman, that stood together over the cradle of our religion, perished not till they had ceased to be of service to Christ. Charlemagne, Charles V., Cromwell, and Napoleon were all soldiers of the Church, whether conscious of it or not, whether willingly or not. Here we find a key of the history of other ages and nations; a thread that will lead us out of every labyrinth of the present and the future. Towards Calvary, for thousands of years, all the lines of history converged. And now for other thousands of years, to the end of time, from Calvary will the lines diverge, "till the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and He shall reign for ever and ever."[b]

inheritance of Benjamin

11—15. (11) **between,** *etc.*,[a] De. xxxiii. 12. (12) Comp. xvi. 1—3, wh. gives border of Ephraim. **Beth-aven,** vii. 2. (13) **Luz,** Ge. xxviii. 19. **Ataroth-ádar,** as in xvi. 2; not as in xvi. 7. (14) **compassed,** *etc.*, or *turned on the west side, southwards,*[b] the boundary line of Benj., at the lower Beth-horon, bends southwardly toward *Kirjath-baal.*[c] (15) **Nephtoah,** *Ain Lifta,* xv. 9.

The mystery of Providence.—I looked upon the wrong or back side of a piece of arras (or tapestry): it seemed to me as a continued nonsense. There was neither head nor foot therein, confusion itself had as much method in it,—a company of thrums and threads, with many pieces and patches of several sorts, sizes, and colours; all which signified nothing to my understanding. But then, looking on the reverse, or right side thereof, all put together did spell excellent proportions, and figures of men and cities; so that, indeed, it was a history not wrote with a pen but wrought with a needle. If men look upon some of God's providential dealings with a mere eye of reason, they will hardly find any sense therein, such their muddle and disorder. But, alas! the wrong side is objected to our eyes, while the right side is presented to the high God of heaven, who knoweth that an admirable order doth result out of this confusion: and what is presented to Him at present may, hereafter, be so showed to us as to convince our judgments in the truth thereof.[d]

com. Christ. Exod. ii. 413; *W. Buswell, Ss.* 228.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Give me the eye which can see God in all; the hand which can serve Him with all; and the heart which can bless Him for all."—*Secker.*

d T. Fuller.

16—20. (16) **Jebusi,** = Jerusalem. **En-rogel,** xv. 7. (17) Comp. xv. 5—9. (18) **Arabah,** or the plain. (19) **Beth-**

[a] "No light task to undertake. It required learning and intelligence, which they, or their instructors, brought with them out of Egypt. Josephus says the survey was performed by men expert in geometry."—*Jamieson.*

b Dr. Hitchcock.

[a] "Territory of Benj. was in general mountainous, in part very desert, but in part also as in neighbourhood of Jericho and Jerusalem, a well-cultivated, fruitful land."—*Lange.*

b Spk. Comm.

c Jos. ix. 17.

[a] Forbear, fond man; — *that*

hoglah, xv. 6. (20) **Jordan**, this river is the general boundary on the E.

Wisdom of Providence.—All the events of life are precious to one that has this simple connection with Christ of faith and love. No wind can blow wrong, no event be mistimed, no result disastrous. If God but cares for our inward and eternal life, if by all the experiences of this life, He is reducing it and preparing for its disclosure, nothing can befall us but prosperity. Every sorrow shall be but the setting of some luminous jewel of joy. Our very mourning shall be but the enamel around the diamond; our very hardships but the metallic rim that holds the opal, glancing with strange interior fires.[a]

21–28. cities of Benjamin

21–28. (21) **valley of Keziz**, or *Emek Keziz*; there is a Wady-el-Keziz a little distance E. of Jerusalem. (22) **Zemaraim**, or two wooded hills, mod. Sumrah, *see* Ge. x. 18. (23) **Avim**, poss. same as *Ai*. **Ophrah**, 1 Sa. xiii. 17; not same as in Ju. vi. 11. (24) Sites not known. (25) **Gibeon**, ix. 3. **Ramah**, 1 Sa. i. 19. **Beeroth**, ix. 17. (26) **Mizpeh**, a name applied to different places; this the one mentioned 1 Sa. vii. 5—16. (28) **Zelah**, 2 Sa. xxi. 14. **Gibeah**, Ju. xix. 14. **Kirjath**, not the town of this name in territory of Judah.

Ramah.—The oriental geographers speak of Ramah as the metropolis of Palestine; and every appearance of its ruins even now confirms the opinion of its having been once a considerable city. Its situation, as lying immediately in the high road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, made it necessarily a place of great resort; and from the fruitfulness of the country around it, it must have been equally important as a military station or a depôt for supplies, and as a magazine for the collection of such articles of commerce as were exported from the coast. In its present state, the town of Ramah is about the size of Jaffa, in the extent actually occupied. The dwellings of this last, however, are crowded together around the sides of a hill, while those of Ramah are scattered widely over the face of the level plain on which it stands. The style of building here is that of high square houses, with flattened domes covering them; and some of the old terraced roofs are fenced around with raised walls, in which are seen pyramids of hollow earthenware pipes, as if to give air and light, without destroying the strength of the wall itself. The inhabitants are estimated at little more than five thousand persons, of whom about one-third are Christians of the Greek and Catholic communion, and the remaining two-thirds Mohammedans, chiefly Arabs; the men of power and the military being Turks, and no Jews residing there. The principal occupation of the people is husbandry, for which the surrounding country is highly favourable, and the staple commodities produced by them are corn, olives, oil, and cotton, with some soap and coarse cloth made in the town. There are still remains of some noble subterranean cisterns at Ramah, not inferior either in extent or execution to many of those at Alexandria: they were intended for the same purpose, namely, to serve in time of war as reservoirs of water.[a] Not 400 yards from Rachel's tomb the guide showed us a heap of old rubbish, which he said was called Ramah. This appeared to me like a modern invention, originating in a desire of these very accommodating people to gratify the solicitude of Biblical antiquarians.[b]

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heaven thou can'st accuse, just, though mysterious, leads us on unerring through ways unmarked, from guilt to punishment." — *Eurydice.*

a Beecher.

God does nothing hastily. He allows time to the sea to ebb and flow, to the moon to wax and wane. Our wisdom is to abide His pleasure. "Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise."

"Melancthon, when he used sometimes to be too anxious and troubled, would chide away his fears by saying, 'Let *Philip* cease to rule the world.'" — *Bowes.*

If God has a gracious end in view, He never wants means to bring it about.

a Buckingham.

Ramah is now a poor village on a hill six miles north of Jerusalem: it is called *er-Ram.*

b Dr. Thomson.

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CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

Inheritance of Simeon

1—9. (1) **within the inheritance,** *etc.*, it was taken out of a portion of Judah. (2—7) Comp. xv. 26—32, 42. (6) **thirteen,** 14 names are given, either by error or copyist, or by separation of one of the names into two. (8) **Baalath-beer,** the *Bealoth* of xv. 24. (9) **too much,** prob. in proportion to that wh. could be given to other tribes.

Definitions of Providence.—By the Providence of God, generally speaking, is meant His care for every object of nature; so that His power is uninterruptedly exercised in upholding, controlling, and directing every person and everything, rendering all subservient to His glory, and the accomplishment of His wise, holy, gracious, merciful and righteous purposes. As He is everywhere present in all the perfection of His nature, nothing escapes the observation of His eye, and nothing takes place but by His agency, His appointment, or His permission; for every creature is at His disposal. Inorganic matter is sustained in being by His power; the earth and the heavenly bodies perform their revolutions under His direction; in vegetable nature His hand is in constant operation; by His bounty the wants of the entire animal creation are daily supplied; and mankind, created in His image, endued with understanding, and therefore under His moral government, are the objects of His special regard, having the greatest share in His paternal love.[a]

Inheritance of Zebulun

10—16. (10) **Sarid,** though important as starting the boundary, this place is not identified. (11) **sea,** of Galilee, border of Zebulon nowhere touched the Med. **Jokneam,** xii. 22. (12) **Chisloth-tabor,** flanks of Tabor, *v.* 18. (13) **Gittah-hepher,** or *Gath-hepher*, 2 Ki. xiv. 25. **Remmon-methoar,** or Remmon wh. reacheth to *Neah.* (14) "Makes a turn round Neah towards the N." **Jiphthah-el,** mod. *Jefat*, Rom. Jotapata. (15) **Bethlehem,** mod. village, *Beit-lahin.* **12 cities,** names are not all given here.

Providence in our life.—

Thou cam'st not to thy place by accident,—
It is the very place God meant for thee;
And shouldst thou there small scope for action see,
Do not for this give room for discontent;
Nor let the time thou owest to God be spent
In idly dreaming how thou mightest be,
In what concerns thy spiritual life, more free
From outward hindrance or impediment.
For presently this hindrance thou shalt find,
That without which all goodness were a task
So slight that virtue never could grow strong;
And wouldst thou do one duty to His mind,
The Imposer's—over-burdened thou shalt ask,
And own thy need of grace to help, ere long.[a]

Inheritance of Issachar

17—23. (17) **Issachar,** territory is marked by prev. allotments to Zebulon and Manasseh. (18) **Jezreel,**[a] xvii. 16, **Shunem,**[b] 1 Sa. xxviii. 4. (20) **Kishion,** xxi. 28. (21) **Remeth,** see *Jarmuth* of xxi. 29. **Enganim,** xxi. 29, mod.

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v. 1. *Within, etc.*, the reason whereof see v. 9, and Judah yielded, as being *rationis mancipium; see* Ja. iii. 17.—*Trapp.*

"If virtue promises happiness, prosperity, and peace, then progress in virtue is certainly progress in both of these, for to whatever point the perfection of anything brings us, progress is always an approach towards it."—*Epictetus.*

[a] *T. Jackson.*

v. 14. *Gittah-hepher*, Jonas the prophet's birthplace (2 K. xiv. 25), and therefore the better thought of by God (Ps. lxxxvii. 6): the word means *wine-press of the well*; it is now called el-Meshhad, a ruin, two ms. E. of Sefûrieh.

v. 14. *Jiphthah-el*, wh. *God opens.* It is prob. that in this vall. stood Jotapater, now *Jefat*, so noted in the war with Vespasian.

[a] *Trench.*

[a] "Jezreel, and its famous and

Jenin. (22) **Tabor,** poss. not the mountain, but a town of this name, 1 Chr. vi. 77. **Beth-shemesh,** not confuse with xv. 10, or xix. 38.

The Christian's inheritance.—Poor Christians, what though you have little in hand, yet you have much in hope; though you have little in possession, yet you have much in reversion. He that hath but little in present possession, yet if he hath a fair estate in reversion, he comforts himself, and solaces his spirit in the thoughts of it, that there will come a day when he shall live like a man, when he shall live bravely and sweetly, and this makes him sing care and sorrow away. Poor Christian, do you do so! You have a fine, a fair estate in reversion, though you have but little in possession; therefore, bear up bravely and live comfortably.[c]

24—31. (24) **Asher,** whose W. border was Medit. sea. (25) **Helkath,** xxi. 31. (26) **Misheal,** xxi. 30. **Carmel,** xii. 22. **Shihor-libnath,** black or muddy river, prob. Nahr Belka, 8 miles below Dor. (27) **Cabul,** 4 to 5 miles W. of Jotapata; 10 miles S.E. of Acre. (28) **great Zidon,** in Phœnicia. (29) **Ramah,** 12 miles S.E. of Tyre. (29) **Achzib,** mod. *Zib,* 8 or 9 miles N. of Acre. (30) **Aphek,** xiii. 4.

Views of Providence.—Our views of Providence are now partial and superficial. We judge too much by the appearance and present effect of things; but in the future life we shall enjoy a clearer understanding of them, and see more into the reasons and connections of them. We are now something like a person who should pass judgment upon the interior of a watch, when he had never seen one, nor had any perfect instructions in it; then, we shall be like the same person, having the interior exposed to his view and fully explained in all its parts and relations by one who is intimately conversant with the whole. Now we see Providence as one looking on the back part of a piece of embroidery; then as one looking on the finished and proper side. Now we see it as men see a magnificent stained glass window of a church from the churchyard, then as one who gazes upon it from the interior of the building.[a]

32—39. (33) **Allon to Zaanannim,** or from the oak-forest at Zaan. **Jordan,** bet. seas of Gennesaret and Merom, and above Merom. (34) **westward,** away from the Jordan. **Judah upon Jordan,** the 60 cities. *Havoth Jair,* E. of Jordan, were reckoned to Judah (1 Chr. ii. 4—22). (35) **fenced,** fortified. (36) **Hazor,** xi. 1. (38) **Migdal-el,** poss. *Magdala* of Matt. xv. 39.

Seid Tehâda.—Who was this Lord Judah—for such is the signification of the name—and what place is this? That it marks some very ancient site is unquestionable; and I believe it is that "Judah on Jordan, toward the sun-rising," which Joshua mentions as the extreme N.E. point in the boundary of Naphtali. If this identification be correct, it solves one of the greatest geographical puzzles of the Bible. It always seemed to me impossible that the border of Naphtali could touch that of Judah anywhere, certainly not "upon Jordan toward the sun-rising." But here we have an important ancient site, called Judah, on this most eastern branch of the Jordan, at a point which must have marked the utmost border of the tribe eastward, if we admit that

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fertile plain, was the choicest part of the territory."—*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Ki. i. 3; 2 Ki. iv. 8, viii. 1; S. S. vi. 12.

v 19. *Haphraim, see Ld. and Lk.* 323.

c T. Brookes.

inheritance of Asher

"A man on the summit of a lofty mountain commands a wider landscape, and sees things that on the plains below would have been quite invisible. So many things unknown, incomprehensible to us on the plains of earth, will be all visible on the mount of heaven."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

a J. Bate.

inheritance of Naphtali

"It is good for us to have our well-meantviews frequently perplexed and overturned, else we might grow headstrong and fancy ourselves wise enough to be the Lord's privy counsellors: yea, able to out-counsel Him. We had rather sit with Jesus at the council board, than follow Him with a string on our nose, to turn us round, or turn us back, at His

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pleasure."—*Berri. a Land and Book*, 254.

Inheritance of Dan

"You cannot produce the great man before his time, and you cannot make him die before his time; you cannot displace nor advance him, nor put him back; you cannot continue his existence and replace him, for he existed only because he had his work to do; he exists no longer, because there is no longer anything for him to do; and to continue him is to continue a useless part."—*Cousin.*

a Beecher.

"I am not covetous for gold; but if it be a sin to covet honour, I am the most offending soul alive." — *Shakespeare.*

Israel gives Joshua an inheritance

a "Called also Tunnath-heres (Jud. ii. 9); that is, the figure of the sun, because, belike, the sun had been there worshipped: like another Heliopolis. Here he built the city; he restored the old ruinous city, repaired and beautified it, that it came up to it, and I see no valid objection against this admission. Naphtali possessed the W. side of this plain, and, if able, would certainly have extended their border quite across it to the foot of the mountains, just where this Seid Tehûdah stands. I have great confidence in this identification, and regard it as another evidence that, as our knowledge of this country becomes more extensive and accurate, difficulty after difficulty in Biblical topography will vanish away until all are solved.*a*

40—48. (40) **Dan,** situate bet. allotment of Benjamin and Medit. sea, with Judah on S. and Ephraim N. Comp. borders of these tribes, xv. (42) **Shaalabbin,** Shaalbim, 1 Ki. iv. 9. **Ajalon,** x. 12. (43) **Ekron,** xiii. 3. (44) **Eltekeh,** *etc.*, Levitical cities, as xxi. 23. **Baalath,** as xv. 11. (46) **border before Japho,** or Joppa, Jaffa. (47) **went out,** or was extended; for the reason *see* Ju. i. 34, 35. **Leshem,** *Laish*, N. of territory of Naphtali. Ju. xviii. 7.

True great men.—The great men of the earth are the shadowy men, who, having lived and died, now live again and for ever through their undying thoughts. Thus living, though their footfalls are heard no more, their voices are louder than the thunder, and unceasing as the flow of tides or air. Moses was not half living when he was alive. His real life has been since he died. The Prophets seemed almost useless in their time. They did little for themselves or for the Church of that day; but when you look at the life they have lived since, you shall find they have been God's pilots, guiding the Church through all perils. From their black bosoms they sent forth the blast of His lightning and the roar of His thunder; and to-day, if the Church needs rebuke and denunciation, it is they who must hurl it. I could have killed old Jeremiah, if I could have got at his ribs; but I should like to see the archer that could hit him now. Martin Luther was mighty when he lived; but the shadowy Luther is mightier than a regiment of fleshly Luthers. When he was on earth, he in some sense asked the pope leave to be, and the emperor and the elector leave to be; he asked the stream and the wheat to give him sustenance for a day; but now that his body is dead—now that that rubbish is out of the way—he asks no leave of pope, or elector, or emperor, but is the monarch of thought, and the noblest defender of the faith to the end of time.*a*

49—51. (49) **to Joshua,** a special one in recognition of his great service. (50) **Timnath-serah,**[a] comp. xiv. 6, 9; and Ju. ii. 9, the name means, the portion that remains. (51) Comp. Nu. xxxiv. 17.

The inheritance of Joshua (*v.* 50).—We have the greatest of all Joshua's conquests described in this verse: "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." Many a city—of prodigious strength and renown—had he taken in his time. This little city, which he received as a gift, was more glorious to him than them all. We shall see this, if we consider—I. His lofty position. In some points he was greater than Moses. And yet look at the time when he received his inheritance. The first in station, he was last in time! II. His advanced age. Older by twenty years than all save Caleb, and yet content to wait till the last. And then his choice falls on a little city without note,

III. His great services to Israel. When William conquered England, he considered the whole land to be his. The whole of Canaan belonged to Joshua by a much better right; yet he appropriated none to himself Conclusion:—See (1) The great secret of Joshua's noble disinterestedness: religion; (2) Its success: he left all in God's hands; God accepted the trust, and rewarded it.

The perseverance of great men.—It is not tools that make the workman, but the trained skill and perseverance of the man himself. Indeed, it is proverbial that the bad workman never yet had a good tool. Some one asked Opie by what wonderful process he mixed his colours. "I mix them with my brains, sir," was his reply. It is the same with every workman who would excel. Ferguson made marvellous things—such as his wooden clock, that accurately measured the hours—by means of a common penknife, a tool in everybody's hand; but then everybody is not a Ferguson. A pan of water and two thermometers were the tools by which Dr. Black discovered latent heat; and a prism, a lens, and a sheet of pasteboard enabled Newton to unfold the composition of light and the origin of colour. An eminent foreign *savant* once called upon Dr. Wollaston, and requested to be shown over his laboratories, in which science had been enriched by so many important discoveries; when the doctor took him into a little study, and, pointing to an old teatray on the table, containing a few watch-glasses, test-papers, a small balance, and a blow-pipe, said, "There is all the laboratory I have." Stothard learned the art of combining colours by closely studying butterflies' wings: he would often say that no one knew what he owed to these tiny insects. A burnt stick and a barn-door served Wilkie in lieu of pencil and canvas. Bewick first practised drawing on the cottage-walls of his native village, which he covered with his sketches in chalk; and Benjamin West made his first brushes out of the cat's tail. Franklin first robbed the thunder-cloud of its lightning by means of a kite made with two cross-sticks and a silk handkerchief. Watt made his first model of the condensing steam-engine out of an anatomist's old syringe. Gifford worked his first problem in mathematics, when a cobbler's apprentice, upon small scraps of leather, which he beat smooth for the purpose; whilst Rittenhouse, the astronomer, first calculated eclipses on his plough-handle.

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there he might end his days. '*Regum æquabat opes animis*;' and well he might have engraven over his gates that distich of Ennius concerning Scipio, '*Si fas* {*cædendo* / *cedendo*} *cælestia scandere cuiquam, mi soli cæli maxima porta patet.*'"—*Trapp.*

"A man's genius is always, in the beginning of life, as much unknown to himself as to others, and it is only after frequent trials, attended with success, that he dares think himself equal to the undertakings in which those who have succeeded have fixed the admiration of mankind."—*Hume.*

Conscious growth is better than angelic flattery. A little boy said to me once, "I try to be good, and I know I try." So may you always say, "I try to advance, and I know I move."

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1–6. (1, 2) **cities of refuge,** Ex. xxi. 13; Nu. xxxv. 6—28. (3) **unawares,** De. iv. 42. Indicates the tone of Jewish law thus disting. bet. accidental and wilful homicide.[a] **avenger of blood,** the nearest surviving relative.[b] (4) **declare his cause,** make testimony that his deed was done unwittingly. This sufficed to secure admission. (5) **pursue after him,** even to the city, claiming that he should be delivered up to death. (6) **stand . . judgment,** "before the local court," submitting to a trial in wh. both accusation and defence might be heard. **death of high priest,** Nu. xxxv. 25.

Cities of refuge.—(A Sunday-school address.) Explain purpose for wh. appointed; distinction between deliberate and unpre-

cities of refuge

purpose

a "These laws of Moses were perfectly wise. The man who involuntarily killed another was innocent, but he was obliged to be taken away from before the eyes of the rela-

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tives of the deceased."—*Montesquieu, thro' Graves.*

b "We find vengeance for blood, not only among the Hebrews, Arabs, Persians, but also among the Greeks, with the Germanic and Slavic peoples, in the infancy of their development, as now among savage nations."—*Lange.*

c Hire.

"Be assured those will be thy worst enemies, not to whom thou hast done evil, but who have done evil to thee; and those will be thy best friends, not to whom thou hast done good, but who have done good to thee."—*Lavater.*

"Clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature, and mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it; for these windings and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, and not on the feet."—*Bacon.*

situation

"Make no enemies; he is insignificant indeed, who can do thee no harm."—*Colton.*

d J. Parsons.

e Everybody has

meditated murder; uncivilised nations have idea of blood-revenge, nearest relative being the avenger of blood. These cities of Judea were conveniently situated, could be reached in half day from any part of land. On hills, in full view, with good roads to them, and sign-posts to point the way. Fr. this ill. Christ, the Great Refuge. 1. As sinners we want a refuge; 2. God has Himself provided one for us; 3. God makes the way to His refuge plain; God expects us to flee toward His refuge. Hymn—"Jesus, refuge of my soul."*d*

Highland honour.—The son of a chieftain of the Macgregors, residing on his freehold at Glenorchy, went in the shooting season with a party of young associates to the moors in the braes of the country. They met with a young gentleman of the name of Lamont, from Cowal, who, attended by a servant, was going to Fort William. They all went to a sort of inn that was in the place, and took refreshment together. While there, a quarrel unfortunately arose between Lamont and young Macgregor. Dirks were drawn, and before friends could interfere, Macgregor fell, mortally wounded. In the confusion Lamont escaped, and though pursued, under cover of the night got securely to the house of Macgregor, which happened to be the first habitation that met his eye at the dawn of morning. The chieftain had got up and was standing at the door. "Save my life!" said the stranger, "for men are in pursuit of me to take it away." "Whoever you are," says Macgregor, "here you are safe." Lamont was just brought to an inner apartment, and introduced to the family, when a loud inquiry was made at the door if a stranger had entered the house? "He has," says Macgregor, "and what is your business with him?" "In a scuffle," cried the pursuers, "he has killed your son: deliver him up that we instantly revenge the deed." Macgregor's lady and his two daughters filled the house with their cries and lamentations. "Be quiet," says the chief, with his eyes streaming with tears, "and let no man presume to touch the youth, for he has Macgregor's word and honour for his safety, and as God lives he shall be safe and secure whilst in my house." In a little while, after Lamont had experienced the most kind and hospitable treatment, the chieftain accompanied him, with twelve men under arms, to Inverary, and having landed him in safety on the other side of Lochfine, took him by the hand and thus addressed him:—"Lamont, now you are safe; no longer can I or will I protect you; keep out of the way of my clan. May God forgive and bless you!"

7—9. (7) **Kedesh,** Jos. xii. **Shechem,** Ge. xii. 6. **Kirjath-arba,** Ge. xxiii. 2. (8) **assigned,** had previously assigned, De. iv. 43; refer to this passage also for **Bezer, Ramoth,** and **Golan.** (9) **not die,** *etc.*, the avenger otherwise being at liberty to kill him wherever he might be found.

The cities of refuge (*v.* 9).—Observe—I. That the persons for whom the cities of refuge were provided were in circumstances of imminent danger. II. That these persons were furnished with ample directions and facilities to reach the cities. III. That, on reaching them, they were assured of inviolable security. See—1. The grounds of this security; 2. The blessings involved in it. IV. That if they removed or were found away from the cities, they were justly left to perish.*e*

The Spaniard and the Moor.—A Spanish cavalier having killed a Moorish gentleman at Grenada, in a duel, instantly fled from justice. He was vigorously pursued, but, availing himself of a sudden turn of the road, he leaped, unperceived, over a garden wall. The proprietor, who was also a Moor, happened to be walking in the garden, and the Spaniard fell upon his knees before him, acquainted him with his case, and in the most pathetic manner implored concealment. The Moor listened to him with compassion, and generously promised his assistance. He then locked him in a summer-house, and left him, with an assurance that when night approached he would provide for his escape. A few hours afterwards, the dead body of his son was brought to him, and the description of the murderer exactly agreed with the appearance of the Spaniard whom he had then in custody. He concealed the horror and suspicion which he felt; and, retiring to his chamber, remained there till midnight. Then going privately into the garden, he opened the door of the summer-house, and thus accosted the cavalier:—"Christian! the youth whom you have murdered was my only son. Your crime merits the severest punishment. But I have solemnly pledged my word for your security: and I disdain to violate even a rash engagement with a cruel enemy." He conducted the Spaniard to the stables, and furnished him with one of his swiftest mules. "Fly," said he, "whilst the darkness of night conceals you—your hands are polluted with blood; but God is just, and I humbly thank Him that my faith is unspotted, and that I have rejoined judgment unto Him."[b]

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enemies. To have an enemy is quite another thing. One must be somebody in order to have an enemy. One must be a force before he can be resisted by another force."—*Mdme. Swetchine.*

"A Christian should not discover that he has enemies by any other way than by doing more good to them than to others."—*Bp. Wilson.*

"The best sort of revenge is not to be like him who did the injury."—*Antoninus.*

b Preacher's Lantern.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

cities of the Levites

summary

1—8. (1) heads of the fathers, the most venerable men of the three Levitical families of *Gershom*, *Kohath*, and *Merari*. **Eleazar,**[a] closely associated with Joshua in his life-work. (2) **Shiloh,** called "the camp,"[b] only designed to be temporary resting-place for the Ark. **commanded,** Nu. xxxv. 1—5. **suburbs,**[c] portions of the country close round the cities. "These were, however, not fields for agriculture, but pastures for cattle."[d] (3) **out of,** giving up some of their tribal rights to them. (4) The priestly office ran in this line.[e] **thirteen cities,** a large allotment.[f] (5) **the rest,** *etc.*, descendts. of Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.[g] (6) **Gershom,** firstborn son of Levi. Ex. vi. 16. (7) These cities were mostly E. of Jordan. (8) Cities not *taken* by Jos., but *given* by the people.

No support without religion.—There are few instances, I believe, to be met with, in any situation, of a regular and supported conduct without the aid of religion. This is necessary to fill up and quicken those dull intervals which happen in the busiest life, and to preserve a retired one from a total stagnation. It is religion which must plant in the soul that motive principle which will display itself in a useful course of employment, whatever be the circumstances in which we are placed, like a perennial spring, that still sends forth a pure and salubrious stream, notwithstanding every alteration of weather or vicissitude of seasons. The activity of man, as a rational being, depends chiefly on the end he has in view. Now the end presented to him by religion

a Nu. iii. 32. xx. 28. xxvi. 1. xxvii. 18—23; Jos. xiv. 1, xxiv. 33.

b Ju. xxi. 12.

c Lat. *suburbium*, fr. *sub*, under, and *urbs*, a city.

d Stanley.

e Nu. xviii. 1, 2, 7.

f "It appears that the two surviving sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, had together twenty-four sons, heads of priestly families. Nor would either priests or Levites occupy the whole of the

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dwellings in any city."—*Spk. Comm.*

g Ex. vi. 18; Nu. iii. 19, xxvi. 57.*

h Bates.

a "This was a provision, the admirable wisdom and propriety of which was fully manifested on the schism that took place in the reign of Rehoboam."—*Jamieson.*

"When a man is told that the whole of religion is summed up in the love of God and the love of man, he is ready to cry out like Charoba, in Gebir, at the first sight of the sea, 'Is this the mighty ocean? Is this all?' Yes, all! but how small a part of it do your eyes survey! Only trust yourself to it; launch out upon it; sail abroad over it; you will find it has no end; it will carry you round the world."—*Hare.*

b Taylor.

a 1 Ki. ii. 26, Jo. i. 1, xi. 21, 23; Ezr. ii. 23; Ne. vii. 27; Is. x. 30.

A hidden light soon becomes dim, and if it be entirely covered up, will expire for want of air. So it is with hidden religion. It must go out. There cannot be a Christian whose light in some aspects does not shine.

is of the most excellent and interesting nature, and if duly apprehended will always command a vigorous exercise of his moral and intellectual powers, and thus furnish him with the noblest occupation, even in the midst of a desert. He who is fully conscious that he has a soul to save, and an eternity to secure, and, still further to animate his endeavours, that God and angels are the spectators of his conduct, can never want motives for exertion in the most sequestered solitude.[h]

9—12. (9, 10) The situation of these cities should be observed; they were all close round the spot in which the Ark of God was permanently to rest.[a] (11) **Arba,** Ge. xxiii. 2. (12) **fields,** *etc.*, in this case limiting the suburbs so as not to interfere with Caleb's possession, Jos. xiv. 14; 1 Chr. vi. 56.

The simplicity of religion.—He that means to meditate on the best order to the productions of piety must not be inquisitive for the highest mysteries, but the plainest propositions are to him of the greatest use and evidence. For meditation is the duty of all; and therefore God hath fitted such a matter for it, which is proportioned to every understanding; and the greatest mysteries of Christianity are plainest, and yet most fruitful of meditation, and most useful to the production of piety. High speculations are as barren as the tops of cedars; but the fundamentals of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine. For know, that it is no meditation, but it may be an illusion, when you consider mysteries to become more learned without thoughts of improving piety. Let your affections be as high as they can climb towards God, so your considerations be humble, fruitful and practically mysterious. "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest," said David. The wings of an eagle would have carried him higher; but yet the innocent dove did furnish him with a better emblem to represent his humble design; and lower meditations might sooner bring him to rest in God. "An old and simple woman," said Ægidius, "if she loves Jesus, may be greater than was Brother Bonaventure." Want of learning and disability to consider great secrets of theology do not at all retard our progress to spiritual perfections. Love to Jesus may be better promoted by the plainer understandings of honest and unlettered people, than by the finer and more exalted speculations of great clerks, that have less devotion.[b]

13—19. (13) **a refuge,** cities of refuge were all Levitical cities. **Libnah,** Jos. x. 29. (14) **Jattir,** Jos. xv. 48. **Eshtemoa,** Jos. xv. 50. (15) **Holon,** Jos. xv. 51. **Debir,** or *Kirjath-Sepher*, Jos. x. 38, 39, xv. 15, 49. (16) **Ain,** Jos. xv. 32. **Juttah,** Jos. xv. 55. **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10. (17) **Gibeon,** Jos. ix. 3—27. **Geba,** or *Gaba*, Jos. xviii. 24. (18) **Anathoth,**[a] 1 Chr. vi. 60. **Almon,** *Alemeth* of 1 Chr. vi. 60. (19) **priests,** as disting. fr. Levites.

The influence of religion.—Just as the sun gleams over the palace and into the cottage, flushing alike with its splendour the council chamber of the monarch and the kitchen of the peasant; as the all-pervasive light fills the vast dome of the sky and the tiny cup of the flower, so religion illumines at once the heaven of our hopes and the earth of our cares. Secularities become hallowed; toil brightens with the smile of God · business becomes

crystalline; light from God comes through it to us, glances from us to go through it to God.[b]

20—26. (20) **Ephraim**, for district allotted, *see* Jos. xvi. 5, 8. (21) **Shechem**, Ge. xii. 6, xxxiii. 18—20. **Gezer**, Jos. x. 33, xii. 12, xvi. 3, 10. (22) **Kibzaim**, poss. *Jokneam* of 1 Chr. vi. 68. **Beth-horon**, two places of the name, Jos. xvi. 3, 5. (23) **Eltekeh, Gibbethon**, Jos. xix. 44. (24) **Aijalon, Gath-rimmon**, Jos. xix. 42, 45. (25) **Tanach**, *Taanach*, Jos. xii. 21. **Gath-rimmon**, comp. *Bileam*, *Ibleam*, 1 Chr. vi. 70. (26) **remained**, the number was seriously lessened after revolt of Korah.[a]

Religion the basis of society.—We know, and what is better we feel, inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort. We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against not only our reason, but our instincts, and that it cannot prevail long. But if in the moment of rest, and in a drunken delirium from the hot spirit drawn out of the alembic of hell, we should uncover our nakedness, by throwing off that Christian religion, which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilisation among us, and among many other nations, we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a veil) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take place of it.[b]

27—33. (27) **Golan**, De. iv. 43. **Beeshterah**,[a] or Ashteroth, as 1 Chr. vi. 71. (28) **Kishon**, Jos. xix. 20, *Kedesh* is substituted, 1 Chr. vi. 72. **Dabareh**, or *Daberath*. (29) **Jarmuth**, not as Jos. x. 3—5, prob. *Remeth*, Jos. xix. 21, and *Ramoth*, 1 Chr. vi. 73. **Enganim**, Jos. xix. 21. (30) **Mishal**, Jos. xix. 26. **Abdon**, prob. *Hebron* of Jos. xix. 28. (31) **Helkath**, Jos. xix. 25, *Hukok*, as 1 Chr. vi. 75. **Rehob**, Jos. xix. 28, 30. (32) **Kedesh in Galilee**, Jos. xii. 22. **Hammoth-dor**, Jos. xix. 35. **Kartan**, prob. *Rakkath* of xix. 35, and *Kirjathaim* of 1 Chr. vi. 76.

Artificial religion.—When Archdeacon Hare first visited Rome, some of his Protestant friends, it is said, who knew his love of art and the personal sympathy which he had with the Eternal City, trembled for the effect it might produce upon his mind. These fears were groundless. Rome was all, and more than all he had imagined. But the splendid vision left him a stronger Protestant than it found him. "I saw the Pope," he used to say, "apparently kneeling in prayer for mankind; but the legs that kneeled were artificial: he was in his chair. That sight was enough to counteract all the æsthetical impressions of the worship, if they had been a hundred times stronger than they were." Thus it is with all mere ritualism and other formalism,—the legs which kneel are artificial.

34—42. (34) **Jokneam**, as Jos. xii. 22. **Kartah**, poss. *Kattath*, Jos. xix. 15; comp. 1 Ch. vi. 77. (35) **Dimnah**, prob. *Rimmon*. **Nahalal**, village 4 miles from Nazareth, in plain of Esdraelon. (36) **Bezer**, De. iv. 32. **Jahazah**, Jos. xiii. 18. (37) **Kedemoth and Mephaath**, Jos. xiii. 18. (38, 39) **Ramoth, Mahanaim, Heshbon**, and **Jazer**, Jos. xiii. 25, 26. (40—42) This number of cities seems a large proportion, but the cities were scarcely more than villages in size.

Proxy religion.—A certain man who would never go to church,

b S. Coley.

a Nu. xvi. It has been said that men carry on a kind of coasting trade with religion. In the voyage of life they profess to be in search of heaven, but take care not to venture so far into their approximations to it as entirely to lose sight of the earth; and should their frail vessel be in danger of shipwreck, they will gladly throw their darling vices overboard, as other mariners their treasures, only to fish them up again when the storm is over.

b Burke.

a "The syllables should be written continuously, and not divided as in A.V. The name is a contraction of *Beth-Ashterah*, or house of Ashterah."—*Spk. Comm.*

"All who have been great and good without Christianity would have been greater and better with it. If there be, among the sons of men, a single exception to this maxim, the divine Socrates may be allowed to put in the strongest claim. It was his high ambition to deserve, by deeds and not by creeds, an unrevealed heaven, and by works, not by faith, to enter an unpromised land."—*Colton.*

"Too many of us are like the

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little girl, who, at the close of her evening prayer one day, said, "Now, good-by, God; good-by, Jesus Christ: I'm going to Boston to-morrow."—*C. D. Foss.*

when he heard the bell, would say to his wife, "Go thou to church, and pray for thee and me." One night, he dreamed that both he and his wife were dead, and they knocked together at heaven's gate for entrance. St. Peter (by the legend) is the porter, and suffered the wife to enter in, but kept the husband out, answering him, "She is gone in both for herself and thee. As thy wife went to church for thee, so she must go to heaven for thee."

the promise fulfilled

43—45. (43) **all the land,**[a] all was allotted, though some remained to be taken fr. orig. occupiers. (44) **rest,**[b] no enemy venturing actively to disturb them. (45) **all came to pass,**[c] no limitation on side of God's provision, but some on the side of the people's faith.

Preciousness of the promises.—The promises of God are to the believer an inexhaustible mine of wealth. Happy is it for him if he knows how to search out their secret veins, and enrich himself with their hidden treasures. They are an armoury, containing all manner of offensive and defensive weapons. Blessed is he who has learned to enter into the sacred arsenal, to put on the breastplate and the helmet, and to lay his hand to the spear and to the sword. They are a surgery in which the believer will find all manner of restoratives and blessed elixirs; nor lacks there an ointment for every wound, a cordial for every faintness, a remedy for every disease. Blessed is he who is well skilled in heavenly pharmacy, and knoweth how to lay hold on the healing virtues of the promises of God.[d]

a Ge. xiii. 15, xv. 18, xxvi. 3, xxviii. 3, 4, 13; Ex. iii. 17.
b Jos. xi. 23; He. iv. 9, 10; De. vii. 24; Ps. lxxviii. 55.
c Jos. xxiii. 14; Ps. xvi. 5, 6.
d Spurgeon.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

the tribes of Reuben dismissed

1—6. (1) **Reubenites,** *etc.*, not the whole tribe, but the contingent of armed men who aided in the invasion.[a] (2) **kept,** *etc.*, Nu. xxxii. 20. (3) **these many days,** the time had prob. reached to seven years. (4) **land of your possession,** Nu. xxxii. 23; Jos. xiii. 8. (5) **diligent heed,** this counsel was necessary, bec. their separation would put them in peril of forgetting Jehovah. (6) **blessed them,** in the name of the Lord; and thanking them for valuable and faithful service.

The disbanding of the troops of Israel (4, 5).—From this parting exhortation we are led to remark—I. That a progress in holiness is above all things to be desired. II. That, whatever progress any person may have made, he still needs to hear words of counsel and exhortation. III. That a state of peace and prosperity is a season of peculiar danger.[b]

Rest.—Rest is a sweet word to a weary soul; all seek it, none but believers find it. "We which have believed, do enter into rest." Not they shall, but they do enter into rest. There is a sweet calm upon the troubled soul after believing, an ease or rest of the mind, which is an unspeakable mercy to a poor weary soul. Christ is to it as the ark was to the dove, when she wandered over the watery world, and found not a place to rest the sole of her foot. Faith centres the unquiet spirit of man in Christ, brings it to repose itself and its burden on Him. It is the soul's dropping anchor in a storm, which stays and settles it.[c]

a C. Simeon, M.A.
b J. Flavel.
c He that would rest must work. Rest is for heaven, toil is for earth. There will be no Monday in heaven; and we shall not have to begin the old round of toil afresh as soon as the Sabbath's peace is past. There will be an everlasting Sabbath. The nearer the soul is to God, the less its perturbations; as the point nearest the centre of a circle is subject to the least motion.

the altar of witness

7—10. (7) Explains why only half the tribe of Manasseh went back over Jordan. (8) **divide the spoil,** Nu. xxxi. 25—29;

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1 Sa. xxx. 24. (9) **out of Shiloh,** showing that they staid with Jos. till after the sanctuary was moved from Gilgal. **Gilead,** used generally for country E. of Jordan. (10) **borders . . Canaan,** much diff. of opinion as to wh. side the river this altar was placed.[a] **a great altar,** intended to be clearly visible from the opposite bank.

Refraining from appearance of evil.—A Christian is called to refrain from some things, which, though actually right, yet will not bear a good appearance to all men. I once judged it my duty to refuse a considerable sum of money which I might lawfully and fairly have received, because I considered that my account of the matter could not be stated to some, to whom a different representation would be made. A man who intends to stand immaculate, and, like Samuel, to come forward and say, "Whose ox, or whose ass, have I taken?" must count the cost. I knew that my character to me was worth more than this sum of money. By probity a man honours himself. It is the part of a wise man to waive the present good for the future increase. A merchant suffers a large quantity of goods to go out of the kingdom to a foreign land; but he has his object in doing so: he knows, by calculation, that he shall make so much more advantage by them. A Christian is made a wise man by counting the cost.[b]

[a] Advocates of E. bank, *Josephus, Maurer, Bp. Wordsworth, Lange*, etc.; of W. bank, *Spk. Comm.*, etc.

v. 10. *Hall's Contemp. Altar of the Reubenites; Smith's Old Test. Hist.* 263; *Dr. Kitto's Daily Bibl. Illus.* ii. 307.

"An ingenious web of probabilities is the surest screen a wise man can place between himself and the truth."—*G. Elliot.*

[b] *R. Cecil.*

11—14. (11) **over against,** confronting. **borders,** *lit.* circuits. **at the passage,** returning tribes would cross by the ford. (12) **whole congregation,** more valiant to keep *others* free fr. idolatry than to keep themselves. **gathered,** *etc.*, they had begun to disperse to their several districts, this news created general excitement. (13) **Phinehas,** Ex. vi. 25; Nu. xxv. 6, xxxi. 6. (14) **chief house,** marg. *house of the father.*[a]

The altar of witness (*vv.* 11, 12).—This history will suggest much for the regulating of—I. National interests. II. Judicial policy. III. Religious zeal. Our zeal should particularly exert itself—1. To prevent apostasy from God; 2. To preserve love and unity with man; 3. To avert the Divine judgments from our guilty land.[b]

the deputation to Reuben

[a] The quality of the deputies evinced the deep solicitude that was felt on the occasion to maintain the purity of the Divine worship throughout Israel."—*Jamieson.*

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

Evils of suspicion.—If thou begin to suspect evil of another, the next thing is to conclude it, and the next to report it. This suspicion is a strange shadow, that every action of another will cast upon our minds, especially if we be beforehand a little disaffected towards them. Thus, very dreams increased suspicion against Joseph in his brethren. And if once a man be cut of esteem with us, let him then do what he will, be it never so virtuous and commendable, suspicion will still be the interpreter; and where suspicion is the interpreter of men's actions, slander and detraction will be the gloss and comment upon them. Indeed, suspicion is always too hasty in concluding: and many times, our jealousies and distrusts, upon very small occasion, prompt us to conclude that what we have thus surmised is certainly come to pass; and so we take shadows for enemies, and report that confidently for truth, which yet we never saw acted, but only in our own fancies.[c]

[c] *Bp. Hopkins.*

"Never put much confidence in such as put no confidence in others. A man prone to suspect evil is mostly looking in his neighbour for what he sees in himself. As to the pure all things are pure, even so to the impure all things are impure."—*Hart.*

15—20. (15, 16) **an altar,** wh. they supposed was intended *to be* a place of sacrifice, but really was only designed for a memorial. In connecting the word *trespass* with a person, Jehovah, it is

the message delivered

[a] *Lange.*

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b Nu. xxv. 4, 10—15.

c Jos. xxiv. 14—23.

v. 20. *Bp. Hacket, Ss.* 831.

d J. Parsons.

Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely, nor with sour looks, or in bitter language; for these ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best effects of reproof. They do certainly inflame and disturb the person reproved. "Surmise is the gossamer that malice blows on fair reputations; the corroding dew that destroys the choice blossom. Surmise is primarily the squint of suspicion, and suspicion is established before it is confirmed." —*Zimmerman.*

Austin defines covetousness as a dishonest and insatiable desire for gain, and in one of his epistles compares it to hell, which devours all and yet never hath enough, a bottomless pit and endless misery.

Reuben's reply

a Includes the three names of God, El Elohim, and Jehovah.

b "There is no word of reproach or recrimination in their vindication of themintended to suggest that they dealt treacherously, underhandedly.[a] (17) **iniquity,**[b] put for its conseq. **not cleansed,** *etc.*, inclination to Baal worship still lingered among the people.[c] (18) **with the whole cong.,** as in the illus. case, when 24,000 died. (19) **unclean,** seemed so to them as separated by Jordan fr. the sanctuary. (20) **Achan,** ch. vii. In this case, too, indiv. sin brought terrible conseq. on the whole people.

Achan's sin and end.—Here (*v.* 20) is a reference to—I. The perpetration of sin. Our text refers us to the "iniquity" of Achan. This was heinous on account of—1. Its intrinsic nature; 2. Its being perpetrated against the Divine command, distinctly expressed and amply known; 3. Its attendant dissimulation and attempted concealment. II. The infliction of punishment: "that man perished not alone." Observe the punishment of the transgressor. 1. Himself; 2. In relation to the interests of others. III. The lessons which from the example of guilt and punishment ought to be secured. There ought to be amongst us—1. Anxious application for the pardon of our transgressions, perpetrated in past times; 2. The determined repudiation and avoidance of sin for the times that are to come; 3. The diligent endeavours to bring our fellow-men to salvation.[d]

Rebuking with authority.—When the late Rev. Mr. K—— was settled in his congregation of S——, they could not furnish him with a manse, or even with lodgings. In these circumstances, a Captain P——, in the neighbourhood, though a stranger to religion, generously took him into his family, and gave him his board, it is believed, gratuitously. But our young clergyman soon found himself in very unpleasant circumstances, owing to the captain's usual practice of profane swearing. Satisfied of his duty, however, he determined to perform it at all hazards. Accordingly, one day at table, after a very liberal volley of oaths from the captain, he observed, calmly, "Captain, you have certainly on the present occasion made use of a number of very improper terms." The captain, who was rather a choleric man, was instantly in a blaze. "Pray, sir, what improper terms have I used?" "Surely, captain, you must know," replied the clergyman, with greater coolness, "and having already put me to the pain of hearing them, you cannot be in earnest in imposing upon me the additional pain of repeating them." "You are right, sir," resumed the captain, "you are right. Support your character, and we will respect you. We have a parcel of clergymen around us here, who seem quite uneasy till they get us to understand that we may use any freedoms we please before them, and we despise them." It ought to be known that the captain never afterwards repeated the offence in his presence, and always treated Mr. K—— with marked respect, and befriended him in all his interests.

21–25. (21) **children of,** by their representatives. They vigorously yet calmly resent the unworthy suspicion of their brethren. (22) **Lord God of gods,**[a] repeated twice in earnest protestation.[b] **save us not this day,** direct appeal to immediate judgment of God. (23) Mention of the diff. kinds of sacrifice is intended to repudiate all *worshipping* intentions in connection with it. (24) **your children,**[c] dwelling in Jehov.'s acknowland. **our children,** separated by the river, and gradually becoming alienated. (25) **Jordan a border,** the natural boundary of the whole country on E. side.

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How to meet unjust accusations (*v.* 22).—1. *The unworthy accusation.*—These tribes had behaved so honourably and well, they ought not to have been so easily suspected. 'Twas well for them to go at once and inquire, but they might have gone more kindly. We should be very valiant for God, but very slow to accuse our brethren. 2. *The soft answer.*—The tribes might well have been indignant. They give model of patience, and illus. of the power of patience. "Not easily provoked." "Thinketh no evil."[d]

A happy reproof.—When only nineteen, Mdlle. Wagner was walking round one of the squares in the immediate vicinity of her residence in company with a friend much older than herself, when the ladies became painfully conscious that they were followed by two fops, who took good care that their admiration of the younger one should reach her ears. Piqued at her indifference alike to their proximity and their remarks, they pushed rudely by at an accelerated pace, and soon after turned back again, so as to meet her face to face. As they drew near, she heard one of them, in animated dispute with his companion, say, "She is, I tell you!" and the other, "She is not!" The first speaker drew up directly in front of her, put up his glass, and then pronounced his verdict:—"She *is* painted, by God!" She stopped, haughtily scanned him from head to foot, and with a face aflame with indignation retorted on him, "Yes, sir! I am painted (then pointing solemnly to heaven)—by God!" The young men, not altogether destitute of good feeling, were awed by the gravity of her reproof; and, blushing for their effrontery, took off their hats, retiring from the scene, it is to be hoped, sadder and wiser men.[e]

selves."—*Spk. Comm.*

c "This anxiety was not unfounded, in so far as in the promises only Canaan was spoken of, therefore only the land W. of Jordan."—*Lange.*

v. 22. *J. Hunt, M.A., Ss.* 165; *Dr. W. Smith, A Serm.*; *D. W. Marks, Ss.* 1.

vv. 22, 23. *M. Henry, Wks.* 1132.

d *Hive.*

"He who when called upon to speak a disagreeable truth tells it boldly and has done, is both bolder and milder than he who nibbles in a low voice and never ceases nibbling."—*Lavater.*

e *Life of C. M. Young.*

purpose of the altar stated

26—29. (26) **altar,** making it in form of *altar*, not of ordinary *pillar*, that it might remind of the altar at the tabernacle. (27) **witness,**[a] *v.* 34, a pledge that they would also serve Jehovah in His appointed way. (28) **pattern,** or image, representation. To it and its associations appeal could be made as long as it stood. (29) **God forbid,** solemn form of repudiating the mere idea.

The altar of witness.—I. The outcome of the purest motives is sometimes open to misinterpretation. II. Suspicions not to be harboured, but explanation sought. III. Treat false accusations with prudence and meekness. IV. Abstain from the appearance of evil: and, by timely explanations, let not your good be evil spoken of.

Avoiding the appearance of evil.—President Adams the elder was once within twenty miles of home when overtaken by the Sabbath. He had been delayed by impassable snow-banks. A sickly family at home required his presence. His clerical friend, with whom he lodged, told him he thought the circumstances of his case would justify his travelling on the Sabbath. His reply was, that, to those who witnessed it, it would have the appearance of evil, as they would be ignorant of the justifying circumstances. The friends of the Sabbath would be grieved to see him apparently disregard the sacredness of the day; and those who wished to be free from its restraints would rejoice to have him to sanction their indulgence by his example.

a *Ge.* xxxi. 47—49.

"Reprove not in their wrath incensed men; good counsel comes clean out of season then: but when his fury is appeased and past, he will conceive his fault, and mend at last. When he is cool and calm then utter it: no man gives physic in the midst o' th' fit."—*Randolph.*

Without consistency there is no moral strength.

30—34 (30) **pleased them.** Heb. *it was good in their eyes*, it satisfied their anxieties, and calmed their fears. (31) **now ye**

the name of the altar

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have delivered, rather, kept from falling under the judgment of God.[a] (32, 33) **pleased,** *etc.*, who waited with utmost distress the return of their deputation. **did not intend,** abandoned their intention. (34) **Ed,** a *witness.*[b]

On receiving reproof.—Many who will not stand a direct reproof, and cannot abide to be plainly admonished of their fault, will yet endure to be pleasantly rubbed, and will patiently bear a jocund wipe; though they abominate all language purely bitter or sour, yet they can relish discourse having in it a pleasant tartness: you must not chide them as their master, but you may gibe with them as their companion; if you do that, they will take you for pragmatical and haughty; this, they may interpret friendship and freedom. Most men are of that temper; and particularly the genius of divers persons, whose opinions and practices we should strive to correct, doth require not a grave and severe, but a free and merry way of treating them. . . . The guilty person cannot but observe, that he who thus reprehends him is not disturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no small efficacy to his wholesome suggestions. Such a reprehension, while it forceth a smile without, doth work remorse within; while it seemeth to tickle the ear, doth sting the heart. In fine, many whose foreheads are brazed, and hearts steeled against all blame, are yet not of proof against derision; divers who never will be reasoned may be rallied into better order; in which cases raillery, as an instrument of so important good, as a servant of the best charity, may be allowed.[c]

a Rescued the nation fr. the calamity of a fratricidal war, or providential judgments."—*Jamieson.*

b "The title placed on the altar was, perhaps, simply as Ep Wordsworth suggests, 'a witness bet us that the Lord is God.'"—*Spk. Comm.*

"Considering how many difficulties a friend has to surmount before he can bring himself to reprove me, I ought to be very much obliged to him."—*J. Foster.*

c *Barrow.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

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Joshua's dying charge to Israel

1—5. (1) **a long time after,** 14 yrs. after conquest, 7 yrs. after distrib. of the land. **stricken in age,** Heb. *come into days,* Jos. xiii. 1. (2) **all Israel,** in an assembly of their leaders and representatives.[a] (3) **ye have seen,** he reminds them that they had all shared experiences of God's power in recent years.[b] (4) **nations that remain,** still unsubdued, or not dispossessed of their territories. (5) Assurance of continuing Div. aid, if they only remained faithful.

An aged preacher (*v.* 1).—1. *The man.*—A great man, a brave man, a good man, an old man, a faithful man, a pious man. The strength of his whole life was the decision for God which he made when he began his career. Impress this. Begin life as devoted to God in Christ. 2. *The audience.*—All great men; magistrates and generals (Dc. i. 15). Most of them Joshua's companions for many years. Full of deepest respect for him. Would reverently listen to all he would say. Show that they give us an example of how to listen to our teachers. 3. *The speech.*—Its reminiscences; its personal testimony; its warnings of coming danger; its plea for heart-religion.[c]

Need of perseverance.—He who allows his application to falter, or shirks his work on frivolous pretexts, is on the sure road to ultimate failure. Let any task be undertaken as a thing not possible to be evaded, and it will soon come to be performed with alacrity and cheerfulness. The habit of strenuous, continued labour will become comparatively easy in time, like every other

a De. i. 15.

b "Of his own merits towards Israel the modest hero boasts not a word."—*Lange.* vv. 1—3. *F. D. Maurice, Old Test.* 311.

c *Hive.*

"He will never enjoy the sweets of the spring, nor will he obtain the honeycombs of Mount Hybla, if he dreads his face being stung, or is annoyed by briers. The rose is guarded by its thorn, the honey is defended by the bee."—*From the Latin.*

habit. Thus even men with the commonest brains and the most slender powers will accomplish much, if they will but apply themselves wholly and indefatigably to one thing at a time. Sir Charles Napier, when in India, encountered an army of 35,000 Beloochees with 2,000 men, of whom only 400 were Europeans. He charged them in the centre, up a high bank, and for three hours the battle was undecided. At last they turned and fled. It is this sort of pluck, tenacity, and determined perseverance which wins soldiers' battles, and, indeed, every battle. It is the one neck nearer that wins the race and shows the blood, the one pull more of the oar that proves the "beefiness of the fellow," as Oxford men say; it is the one march more that wins the campaign; the five minutes more persistent courage that wins the fight. Though your force be less than another's, you equal and outmaster your opponent if you continue it longer and concentrate it more. The reply of the Spartan father who said to his son, when complaining that his sword was too short, "Add a step to it," is applicable to everything in life.[d]

6—10. (6) Comp. counsel given to Jos. himself.[a] (7) **come not among,** have no intercourse with. **make mention of the name,**[b] make object of a call or proclamation. (8) **cleave,** keep close in devotion and obedience to God. (9) **able to stand,** bec. you were so powerful through *His* aid. (10) **one man,** *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 8; De. xxxii. 30.

Religious stability enforced (*v.* 8).—Notice—I. The duty the text recommends: "cleave unto the Lord." This implies—1. Previous union with Him; 2. Faithful adherence to Him—to His name, to His word, to His ways, at all times. II. The importance the text involves. The duty enforced is—1. Reasonable; 2. Honourable; 3. Profitable; 4. Indispensable. III. The motives the text suggests. Motives of—1. Sacred obligation; 2. Former obedience; 3. Sincere gratitude; 4. Solemn warning.

Thorns in the eye.—"What!" says a wife to her angry husband, "am I a thorn in your eyes? Alas! alas! he has seen another; I am now a thorn in his eyes. Were I not a thorn in his eyes, his anger would not burn so long." "My old friend Tamban never looks at my house now, because it gives thorns to his eyes."[c]

11—16. (11) **yourselves,** Heb. *your souls.* True secret of strength and success is *right-heartedness.* (12) **go back,** decline, backslide, fall away fr. yr. allegiance. **make marriages,**[a] the most ready and certain source of national backsliding. (13) **snares and traps,** Ex. xxiii. 33; Nu. xxxiii. 55. **perish fr. off,** moral evils surely involving national decay; as their after history fully exemplified. (14) **this day,** term used generally, *soon.* **going .. earth,** he was contrasting the *abiding* presence of Jehovah. with *temporary* presence of any earthly leaders.[b] (15) all **evil things,** faithfulness to promises involved faithfulness to threatenings. Reference is to Moses' last addresses.[c] (16) **anger,** holy wrath.

Love God (*v.* 11).—I. The nature of love, and of love to God in particular. II. The importance of this principle as characterising the whole of our religion. 1. It distinguishes it from all counterfeits; 2. It keeps everything in a state of moral order; 3. It is the great preservative from error; 4. It is the grand

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"For Hercules himself must yield to odds; and many strokes, tho' with a little axe, hew down and fell the hardest timber'd oak."—*Shakespeare.*

"The whole complexion of a negro is less noticed than a single stain on the features of a white countenance."—*Jay.*

d Smiles.

he exhorts to perseverance

a Jos. i. 7, 8, 9. *b* Ex. xxiii. 13. "To mention the names of the gods, to swear by them, to serve them (by offerings), and to bow down to them (call upon them in prayer), are the four expressions of Divine worship."—*Keil.* *v.* 6. *W. Agar, Ss.* 125; *A. B. Evans, Ss.* 126. *v.* 8. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* i. 366. *vv.* 8, 9. *Bp. Trelawney, A Serm.* *vv.* 10, 11. *Simeon's Wks.* ii. 616. *c Roberts.*

he warns against apostasy

a Ex. xxxiv. 12—16; De. vii. 3. *b* 1 Pe. i. 24, 25. *c* De. xxviii., xxix. *v.* 11. *W. Reading, M.A., Ss.* iii. 336; *R. Walker, Ss.* i. 453; *A. Fuller, Ss.* 268; *T. S. Jones, Ss.*; *G. R. Gleig, Ss.* 15. *vv.* 11—13. *T. Jones, M.A., Wks.* 257. *v.* 14. *Simeon's Wks.* ii. 618; *R. P. Buddicom, Christ. Exod.* ii.

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465; *A. Williams, M.A., St.* ii. 53.

d A. Fuller.

e Homilist.

"As in a distempered and corrupt air it is hard for him that hath a strong constitution to avoid sickness; so it is in evil company, in corrupt ages and places, very hard to live unspotted from the world."—*Cawdray.*

f K. Arvine.

"A Christian, when he makes a good profession, should be sure to make his profession good. It is sad to see many walk in the dark themselves, who carry a lantern for others."—*Pecker.*

spring of evangelical obedience. III. The danger we are in of declining from it. IV. A few directions for preventing decline of love to God. Beware of the love of the world—of indulging any sin. Be conversant with the Word of God—prayer. Society of spiritual people—the cross of Christ.[d]—*Joshua's retrospect* (*v.* 14).—In looking back at this juncture, Joshua seems to have been much impressed by—I. The largeness of God's promises. II. The steadiness of His purposes. III. The completeness of His work: "not one thing hath failed."[e]

Christian conduct in worldly company.—A pious officer of the army, travelling through the Mahratta country, was asked by Judge D——, a religious gentleman, to accompany him to a public dinner, at which the commanding officer of the district, with all his staff, and various other public characters, were expected to meet. "I expressed a wish to be excused," says the officer, "as I had no relish for such entertainments, and did not think that much either of pleasure or profit was to be derived from them." His reply was,—"While I feel it my duty to attend on such an occasion, I certainly have as little pleasure in it as you have. But there is one way in which I find I can be present at such meetings, and yet receive no injury from them. I endeavour to conceive to myself the Lord Jesus seated on the opposite side of the table, and to think what He would wish me to do and to say when placed in such a situation, and as long as I can keep this thought alive on my mind, I find I am free from danger."[f]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

Joshua's charge at Shechem

1—4. (1) **all the tribes,** this was a later assembly, including the people, as well as the leaders. **Shechem,**[a] comp. prev. scene at this place.[b] **before God,** expression usually means before the tabernacle; poss. the Ark was brought fr. Shiloh for this occasion. (2) **your fathers,** names given are Terah and Nahor.[c] **flood,** the river *Euphrates.* **gods,** prob. *teraphim,* as Ge. xxxi. 19—34; the exact nature of their idolatry is unknown. (3) **father Ab.,** their first national father, as with him the Div. covenant was made. (4) **mount Seir,** Ge. xxxvi. 8.

Israel's pledge to serve God (the whole chapter).—I. The pledge reconsidered. It was made at first in view of the goodness and mercy of God in providing for them, keeping and guiding them, and giving them victory over their foes. It would be well for them to know the God of holy claims, of justice, who is swift to punish transgression. There are two sides on which God must be viewed. If we were to take up a religious life for the sake of what we were to get by it, it would be a blessing to be made reconsider our resolve, and think about the holy, jealous God. II. The pledge retaken. Further thought only made them more earnest. Less excitedly, but more reverently and heartily, the people said, "We will serve the Lord." So we should find to know God better, would be to give ourselves to Him more heartily and entirely.[d]

The casket of promises.—Where is thy casket of promises? Bring it out; open the jar of jewels. Pour out the golden ingot, stamped with the image and superscription of heaven's King.

a The LXX. here has Shiloh.

b Jos. viii. 30—35.

c Ge. xi. 27.

vv. 2—13. *Dr. W. B. Collyer, Xptr. Facts,* 355.

d Hive.

"In that central valley of the hills of Ephraim which commands the view of the Jordan valley on the east and the sea on the west, a complete draught through the heart of the country, was the fit seat of the house of Joseph, the ancient portion of their ancestor, given by Jacob himself.

Count over the diamonds that flash in thy hand like stars. Compute the worth of that single jewel, "Ask, and ye shall receive;" or that other ruby, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." Bring forth that royal Koh-i-noor, "He that believeth shall be saved." Then remember who it is that gave them, and to what an unworthy sinner, and tell me if they are not "exceeding great and precious." When Cæsar once gave a man a great reward, he exclaimed, "This is too great a gift for me to receive." "But," said Cæsar, "it is not too great a gift for me to give." So the smallest promise in thy casket is too much for thee to deserve; yet the most magnificent promise is not too great for the King of kings to bestow. God scorns to act meanly and stingily by His children; and how must He scorn us often when we put Him off with such contemptible stinginess of deeds or donations![e]

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In and around Shechem rose the first natural burial-place, a counterpoise to the patriarchal sepulchres of Hebron. Joseph's tomb was already fixed; its reputed site is visible to this day."—*Stanley.*

[e] *Spurgeon.*

5—10. (5) **plagued Egypt,**[a] briefly recalling the well-known signs and wonders. (6) **pursued after,** Ex. xiv. 9. (7) **they cried,** your fathers. **darkness,** the black side of the guiding cloud. Ex. xiv. 20. (8) **they fought,**[b] Nu. xxi. 33. (9) **Balak.**[c] **Balaam,**[d] Nu. xxii. 5. (10) **blessed you,** Nu. xxiv. 3—9.

he recounts Israel's past history from Egypt to Canaan

[a] Ex. iii. 10, iv. 28, v. 1.

[b] De. iii. 8.

[c] Ju. xi. 25.

[d] De. xxiii. 4.

Our trials save us.—Two painters were employed to fresco the walls of a cathedral. Both stood on a rude scaffolding, constructed for the purpose, some forty feet from the floor. One of them was so intent upon his work that he became wholly absorbed, and, in admiration, stood off from the picture, gazing at it with intense delight. Forgetting where he was, he moved back slowly, surveying critically the work of his pencil, until he had neared the edge of the plank on which he stood. At this critical moment his companion turned suddenly, and, almost paralysed with horror, beheld his imminent peril; another instant, and the enthusiast would be precipitated upon the pavement beneath. If he spoke to him, it was certain death; if he held his peace, death was equally sure. Suddenly he regained his presence of mind, and seizing a wet brush, flung it against the wall, spattering the picture with unsightly blotches of colouring. The painter flew forward, and turned upon his friend with fierce upbraidings; but, startled at his ghastly face, he listened to his recital of danger, looked shuddering over the dread space below, and with tears of gratitude blessed the hand that saved him.

vv. 9, 10. *H. Thompson. Balaam's Hist. Considered: Watson's Ss.* 1st Series, 26.

"Because you find a thing very difficult, do not presently conclude that no man can master it; but whatever you observe proper, and practicable by another, believe likewise within your own power."—*Steele.*

11—13. (11) **men of Jericho,** "The phrase is noteworthy; it means apparently the owners or burghers of Jericho."[a] **Amorite,** *etc.*, Jos. iii. 10. (12) **hornet,** Ex. xxiii. 28. (13) **land . . labour,** De. vi. 10—12.

he rehearses the story of the conquest

[a] *Spk. Comm.*

Trials are expressions of love.—Our heavenly Father loveth us; and because He loveth us, He takes away our precious things. He deals with us somewhat after the manner of an ancient painter with his pupil. The young artist had genius, and produced a picture of much merit, which was greatly admired by all. His young heart then swelled with vanity. He laid aside his pallet and pencil, and sat daily before his easel, admiring the offspring of his own genius. One morning, he found his beautiful creations expunged from the canvas. He wept bitterly. His master appeared, and said, "I have done this for your benefit;

v. 14. *Haddon Smith, Ss.* 106; *G. Carr. Ss.* i. 165; *Edm. Beeston, Ss.* 173.

A succession of defeats often paves the way for victory, and a succession of

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victories often paves the way for defeat.

the picture was ruining you." "How so?" demanded the pupil. "Because, in the admiration of your own talents, you were losing your love of the art itself. Take your pencil, and try again." The youth dried his tears, seized his pencil, and produced a masterpiece, which, but for this severe trial, he would in all probability have never executed.

he exhorts Israel to resolve to serve God

a De. xxx. 15.

A. G. Spencer, Ss. 322; *J. Browne, Ss.* i.

v. 15. *E. Calamy, Serm. bef. House of Lords,* 1643; *J. Howe, Wks.* v. 373; *Abp. Tillotson, Ss.* ii. 247, iii. 394; *Dr. D. Jennings, Early Piety,* 70; *Dr. R. Lucas, Ss.* ii. 197; *Dr. J. Foster, Ss.* i. 345; *Abp. Secker, Ss.* ii. 25; *Dr. J. Jortin, Ss.* iv. 93; *G. Whitefield, M.A., Wks.* v. 52; *J. Wesley, M.A., Wks.* vii. 76; *Dr. S. Stennett, Wks.* ii. 22; *Bp. Heber, Ss.* ii. 288; *Bp. Blomfield, Ss.* 147; *J. C. Hare, Ss.* 369; *F. Trench, Ss.* 300; *H. Alford, Ss.* iii. 423; *T. Dale, Ss.* 271.

b J. Parsons.

c R. D. Owen, Among the Breakers.

14–15. (14) **fear,** not dread, but reverence mingled with love, and these finding expression in obedience. **put away,** *etc.*, seeming to intimate that Jos. knew of some inclin. to idolatry still lingering among the people. (15) **seem evil,** *i.e.* undesirable after your experience. **choose ye,**[a] the only service acceptable to God is that in which our heart and will find expression.

The two services (*v.* 15).—I. What are the two orders of service, to one of which you must be devoted? The service of—1. Sin; 2. God. II. What is the contrast which these two orders of service present for careful estimation? 1. Service of sin essentially wrong—of God essentially right; 2. Of sin, degrading—of God, exalting; 3. Of sin, painful—of God, happy; 4. Of sin, destructive—of God, saving. III. What is the conduct which this contrast does properly and invariably secure? 1. The nature of this conduct: "choose you whom ye will serve;" 2. The time for adopting it: "this day;" 3. The mode of exemplifying it: solemn publicity.[b]

An aimless life.—I committed one fatal error in my youth, and dearly have I abided it. I started in life without an object, even without an ambition. My temperament disposed me to ease, and to the full I indulged the disposition. I said to myself: "I have all that I see others contending for; why should I struggle?" I knew not the curse that lights on those who have never to struggle for anything. Had I created for myself a definite pursuit—literary, scientific, artistic, social, political, no matter what, so there was something to labour for and to overcome—I might have been happy. I feel this now—too late! The power is gone. Habits have become chains. Through all the profitless years gone by, I seek vainly for something to remember with pride or even dwell on with satisfaction. I have thrown away a life. I feel sometimes as if there were nothing remaining to me worth living for. I am an unhappy man.[c]

the people promise to serve the Lord

"Anselm was a man of holy resolution: 'I had rather,' saith he, 'go to hell pure from sin than to heaven polluted with that filth.' And saith another, 'I will rather leap into a bonfire than wilfully to sin against God.'"—*T. Brooks.*

a E. P. Scott.

16–18. (16) **people answered,** no doubt through their leaders, all by uplifted hands, or by shout, consenting to their words. (17) They fully concur in Josh.'s declaration that only in the *strength of God* had they been brought out. (18) **our God,** in personal relations with us, which we resolve to maintain.

The people's resolve.—I. Every man must serve some God. II. A man must choose his God. III. Many deem it an evil thing to serve the Lord. IV. Others know it to be a blessed thing to serve the Lord. V. Those who serve God themselves should command their households after them.[a]

Resolutions are deceitful.—Epictetus tells us of a gentleman returning from banishment, who in his journey towards home, called at his house, told a sad story of an imprudent life, the greatest part of which being now spent, he was resolved for the future to live philosophically, and entertain no business, to be candidate for no employment, not to go to the court, nor to salute Cæsar with ambitious attendances, but to study and wor-

ship the gods, and die willingly, when nature or necessity called him. It may be this man believed himself, but Epictetus did not. And he had reason; for letters from Cæsar met him at the doors, and invited him to court; and he forgot all his promises, which were warm upon his lips; and grew populous, secular, and ambitious, and gave the gods thanks for his preferment. Thus many men leave the world, when their fortune has left them; and they are severe and philosophical, and retired for ever, if for ever it be impossible to return; but let a prosperous sunshine warm and refresh their sadness, and make it but possible to break their purposes, and there needs no more temptation, their own heart is enough; they are like "Ephraim in the day of battle, starting aside like a broken bow."[b]

19—21. (19) **ye cannot,** in your own strength: it is more difficult than you imagine. Josh. wanted the resolve of calm judgment, not of excitement. **holy God,** so must be served with holiness. **jealous,** term used first Ex. xx. 5. **not forgive,** rather pass by, as if taking no notice. Josh. is supposing their wilful rebellion and forsaking of God. (20) **strange gods,** Ge. xxxv. 2, 4. **do you hurt,** Josh xxiii. 15. (21) **nay,** verily, assuredly. This their first solemn national response. Former expression by their leaders.

The holy character of God (v. 19).—I. Though the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, He is yet a holy God; He is a jealous God. II. As a consequence of this feature in His character, there are certain conditions of mind in which "He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins," and in which therefore "ye cannot serve the Lord." III. And therefore if, like the people before Joshua, you have fully made up your minds that the Lord your God you will serve, it becomes you to consider beforehand what that service will require from you.[a]

Power of resolution.—It was resolution made Empedocles sacrifice himself to the flames of Etna. It was resolution made Anaxarchus, when his bones were crushed, make sport with his torments, and cry out, "Break, break the carcase of Anaxarchus, but his mind you shall never break." It was resolution made Regulus fling himself into the merciless arms of his enemies, and suffer himself to be stung and pricked to death. It was resolution made Attalus sit down cheerfully in the fiery chair his persecutors had prepared for him, and say, "It's not we that do eat children, but it's you that devour innocent Christians." It was resolution made Blandina encourage her fellow-Christian, though she was wounded, torn, bruised, racked, and miserably handled. It was resolution made Job bear his losses, and ulcers, with invincible magnanimity. It was resolution made David run through a troop and leap over walls (Ps. xviii. 29).[b]

22—25. (22) **against yourselves,** as they took the pledge together they could testify against each other. Each was held responsible for the other. **we are witnesses,** their second response. (23) **put away,** *etc.*,[a] intimates that idolatry lingered among the people, we do not know whether in Egyp. forms. or in Canaanitish, very prob. in use of teraphim, as by family of Jacob. **incline your heart,** without wh. mere outward separation fr. idolatry would be vain. (24) Third and most distinct national response. (25) **a statute,** *etc.*, Ex. xv. 25.

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"Sudden resolutions, like the sudden rise of the mercury in the barometer, indicate nothing but the changeableness of the weather."—*Phelps.*

b Bp. Taylor.

Joshua warns and Israel repeats the promise

v. 19. *Dr. W. Phelan, Remains,* i. 67.
v. 20. *J. Howe, Wks.* vi. 328.
v. 21. *Abp. J. Sharp, Wks.* vi. 200.
vv. 21—27. *Simeon's Wks.* ii. 623.

"A good resolution is the most fortifying armour a good man can wear. That can defend him against all the unwelcome shuffles that the poor rude world can put upon him. Without this, like hot iron he hisses at every drop that finds him; but with it he can be a servant as well as a lord, and have the same pleasantness in the shakes of fortune, that he carries in her softest smiles."—*J. Beaumont.*

a E. G. Marsh, M.A.
b A. Horneck.

Joshua makes a covenant with Israel

a Keil and others, indeed, understand the passage to mean simply that the hearts of some among them were in-

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clined to idolatry. But this is hardly consistent with the plain and obvious sense of the words."—*Spk. Comm.*

v. 22. *S. Davies, Hii.* 433.

v. 24. *C. Chais. St.* i. 61.

b Hice.

Resolution is necessary to guard us against dejection; for the world will beat that man whom fortune buffets. And unless, by this, he can ward off the blows, he will be sure to feel the greatest burden in his own mind. A wise man makes trouble less by fortitude; but to a fool it becomes heavier by stooping to it.

c Dr. J. Hamilton.

a stone of witness erected

a Ge. xxviii. 18, xxxi. 45.

b "Possibly the same as that at the root of wh. Jacob buried the idols and charms found in his family. Ge. xxxv.

c "In a vivid imagination, the stone is regarded as a person, so to speak, who has been and heard everything. Jos. xxii. 34."—*Lange.*

v. 26. *J. Medc, Wks.* i. 85.

d Hice.

"Resolved and agreed, that God's will ought

A popular response to an earnest appeal (*v.* 24).—I. A suitable response to a most important appeal, *v.* 15. It was for this that Joshua had so earnestly laboured. II. A promise of obedience founded upon past experience of Divine power and mercy. III. A promise which, being kept, preserved the people: the decline of their power began with their forgetfulness of these words. IV. You often make good promises to parents, teachers, etc. The virtue lies in the keeping. For this you must seek constant help of God.[b]

The need of perseverance.—In the heathery turf you will often find a plant chiefly remarkable for its peculiar roots. From the main stem down to the minutest fibre you will find them all abruptly terminate, as if shorn or bitten off; and the quaint superstition of the country people alleges that once on a time it was a plant of singular potency for healing all sorts of maladies, and therefore the great enemy of man in his malignity bit off the roots, in which its virtues resided. The plant with this odd history is a very good emblem of many well-meaning but little-effecting people. They might be defined as *radicibus præmorsis*, or rather *inceptis succisis*. The efficacy of every good work lies in its completion, and all their good works terminate abruptly, and are left off unfinished. The devil frustrates their efficacy by cutting off their ends. Their unprofitable history is made up of plans and projects, schemes of usefulness that were never gone about, and magnificent undertakings that were never carried forward; societies that were set agoing, then left to shift for themselves; and forlorn beings who for a time were taken up and instructed, and just when they were beginning to show symptoms of improvement were cast on the world again.[c]

26—28. (26) **wrote these words,** registered this pledge. **great stone,** ancient custom to seal engagements by erection of pillars.[a] **an oak,** the oath, or terebinth, referring to a well-known tree, or grove of trees,[b] Gen. xii. 6. **by the sanctuary,** the ancient one where Ab. and Jac. had sacrificed and worshipped. (27) **it hath heard,** speaking figuratively.[c] (28) **depart,** he dismissed the great assembly.

Sunday-school address on v. 26.—Intro. Picture the scene in Shechem. Joshua's address and the people's response. A memorial stone set up to mark the site, the event, the pledge. I. The stone. Durable material. The stone found recently in Moab; set up in that age, has lasted to this. They might have planted a tree. Preferred a stone to represent their firm and lasting determination to serve God. II. A great stone. Visible fr. afar. They were not ashamed of the promise they had made. Others seeing the stone, and learning its history, encouraged to make a similar vow. III. A great stone under an oak. Travellers encamping there, or shepherds taking shelter fr. the heat there, would see it, inquire about it; idolaters, who worshipped in groves, would see it also. IV. A stone near the sanctuary. It was set up, as in the sight of God. It was like asking Him to help them to keep their promise. It was as a pledge to Him that they would keep it. Remember that God marks your vows, though you set up no memorial stones.[d]

False and true religion.—You have Pilate washing his hands in hypocrisy, as well as you have David washing his hands in innocency. You have the Sadducees with their doctrine, as well

as the Apostles with their doctrine. You have the Pharisee with his prayer, as well as the publican with his prayer. You have the exorcists with their Jesus, as well as Paul with his Jesus. You have Satan with his scripture, as well as Christ with His Scripture. You have Cain with his sacrifice, as well as Abel with his sacrifice. You have Ahithophel with his wisdom, as well as Solomon with his wisdom. You have Jezebel with her fasts, as well as Anna with her fasts. You have the harlot with her vows, as well as Jacob with his vow. You have the devils with their faith, as well as Christians with their faith.[e]

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to determine mine, and not mine pretend to determine the will of God."—*Gossner.*

e H. Smith.

29—31. (29) **Joshua . . died,** soon after this scene. Lightfoot computes that he lived 17, others 27, years after the entrance into Canaan. (30) **border of his inheritance,**[a] according to Jewish custom. **Timnath-serah,** Jos. xix. 50. **hill of Gaash,**[b] not identified. (31) **elders,** *etc.*, Joshua's contemporaries, who shared his impressions of the power and goodness of Jehovah.

death of Joshua

Sunset on Mt. Ephraim (*vv.* 29, 30).—This is a brief obituary. It allows no scope for imagination to paint the scene of the dying hero. But his life is his noblest monument—his vast and varied achievements are his best panegyric. Let us gather, in thought, around that solitary tomb "on the north side of the hill of Gaash." We can read the epitaph of "the man of God" as well as the warrior and the patriot: "he being dead yet speaketh." Four elements of strength appear to stand out conspicuously in Joshua's character, and which distinguish him pre-eminently in the O. T. as the "Warrior Saint." I. Zeal for God's honour: this his paramount aim and motive through life—stripping himself of all glory and exalting God alone (*see* ch. iv. 21—24, v. 14, viii. 30, xxiii. 3). II. Deference to God's law: like every true and loyal soldier, he acted up to the orders of his superior (ch. i. 7, 8, viii. 34, xxiii. 6, xxiv. 27). III. Dependence on God's strength: in the hour of disaster he casts himself humbled before the "Rock of his strength (*see* ch. x. 12—14, 42). IV. Trust in God's faithfulness: this only the necessary concomitant and result of the preceding (*see* ch. xxiii. 14).[c]

a "According to a very ancient tradition, in the same grave were buried the stone knives used in the ceremony of circumcision at Gilgal, wh. were long sought out as relics by those who came in after years to visit the tomb of their mighty deliverer."—*Stanley.*

b Ju. ii. 9; 2 Sa. xxiii. 30; 1 Chr. xi. 32.

v. 29. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 356.

c Dr. Macduff.

Death a halt in the journey of life.—A sergeant of Duryea's Zouaves was wounded at the battle of Bull Run, and lay on the field for three days unrelieved. At last, brought to the hospital, it was too late to save his life. When sinking, Col. Rice broke the news to him thus: "Sergeant, we are going to halt soon; we shall not march much farther to-day." "Are we going to halt, colonel, so early in the day? Are we going into bivouac before night?" "Yes, sergeant: the march is nearly over; the bugle will soon sound the halt." The tears of the colonel interpreted his words; and the sergeant said, "Do you mean that I am so soon to die?" "Yes: you are soon to die." "Well, colonel, I am glad I am going to die: I want to rest, the march has been so long; and I am weary, very weary. I want to halt; I want to be with Christ; I want to be with my Saviour." He bade farewell to his aunt and sister (who had reached his bedside), sent keepsakes to his mother and his affianced, and cheering words to his comrades of the army; then made his last halt on earth to bivouac in heaven.

"It is painful to grow old, to lose by degrees the suppleness, strength, and activity of the body; to perceive each day our organs growing weaker; but when we feel that the soul, constantly exercised, becomes daily more reflective, more mistress of herself, more skilful to avoid, more strong to sustain, without yielding to the shock of all accidents, gaining on the one hand what we lose on the other, we are no longer sensible of growing old."—*Robert Hall.*

32, 33. (32) **bones of Joseph,** the sarcophagus, with his

Joseph's bones

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Interred at Shechem

embalmed body, had been with them through all their wanderings.[a] **Jacob bought**, Ge. xxxiii. 19. (33) **in a hill**, *etc.*, lit. in *Gibea-Phinehas*, 5 miles N. of Guphna, toward Neapolis or Shechem.[b]

Eleazar dies

The burial of Joseph.—Joseph was not interred in Shechem, but, according to the ancient custom, in a field adjoining. Probably the other children of Jacob received the like honour, each tribe taking care to bury its ancestor, either at Machpelah, or elsewhere in the land of Canaan. Josephus asserts that it was so, upon the credit of an ancient tradition. St. Stephen confirms the relation (Ac. vii. 16). Savages consider the tombs of their ancestors as titles to the possession of the lands which they inhabit. This country is ours, say they: the bones of our fathers are here laid to rest. When they are forced to quit it, they dig them up with tears, and carry them off with every token of respect. About thirty miles below the falls of St. Anthony (says Carver), in North America, several bands of the Naudowessie Indians have a burying-place, where these people, though they have no fixed residence, living in tents, and abiding but a few months on one spot, always contrive to deposit the bones of their dead. At the spring equinox these bands annually assemble here to hold a grand council with all the other bands; wherein they settle their operations for the ensuing year. At this time, in particular, they bring with them their dead, for interment, bound up in buffaloes' skins. If any of these people die in the summer, at a distance from the burying-ground, and they find it impossible to remove the body before it would putrefy, they burn the flesh from the bones, and, preserving the latter, bury them in the manner described.[c]

Supplementary Note on the Patriarchate.—Patriarch, a Gk. word, = Ruler, Father; specifically given in N. T. to Abraham (Heb. vii. 4); to twelve sons of Jacob (Ac. vii. 8, 9); to David (Ac. ii. 29). In the LXX. patriarch = head, or prince of tribe (1 Chron. xxiv. 31, xxvii. 30, xxiv. 12): it is commonly applied to desc. of Adam, through Abraham to Moses. Till time of Moses, the moral gov. of God called patriarchal dispensation; defined by Paul as "until the law," from Adam to Moses (Ro. v. 13, 14). It was an experiment of moral gov. in the simple and beautiful form of family harmony, the ideal expressed in Gen. xviii. 19. P. dispen. divided into three stages—1. Adam—flood; 2. Noah—call of A.; 3. Abraham—Moses. Most perfectly seen in third stage. Father hands down covenant blessings to children. Leading idea of patriarch is that it was based on sacredness of family ties and paternal authority. "In Scripture it is authority as consecrated by an ultimate reference to God as the God of the patriarch, the Father—that is, of both him and his children." God's titles and relation "would confirm what the generality of the covenant with Noah and the promise of blessing 'to all nations,' in Abraham's seed, must have distinctly taught, that the chosen family were not substitutes, but representatives of all mankind, and that God's relation to them was a clearer and more perfect type of that in which God stood to all." Still the distinction and preservation of the chosen fam., and the maintenance of the paternal authority, are the special purposes which give a key to the meaning of the history, and of the institutions recorded.—*Topics for Teachers.*

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[a] Ge. l. 25, 26; Ex. xiii. 19; He. xi. 22.

[b] Mod. *Geeb*, as *Maundrell*; *Fibia*, as *Robinson*; *Chirbet Jibia*, as *Ritter*.

[c] "Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service,—two dishes but to one table; that's the end."—*Shakespeare*.

"A grave, wherever found, preaches a short and pithy sermon to the soul."—*Hawthorn*.

[d] *Burder*.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

Introduction.

I. Title, JUDGES (headed *Shophetim* in the Heb., *κριται* in the Alex. V., and called *liber Judicum* in the Vulgate), so named from the acc. it gives of Israel under gov. of *Judges*, of whom there were 13 (including Abimelech), or 15 (including Eli and Samuel). **II. Author,** uncertain; the Jews assign it to Samuel. "As it would seem to fall in the lifetime of that prophet, there is no improbability in supposing him to be the author, who used, no doubt (*see* Deborah's song, cap v.), written documents" (*Ayre*). "Others ascribe it to Phinehas, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or Ezra, who compiled it fr. the memoirs of his own time which were left by ea. Judge: while others think it was compiled out of the public registers or records that were kept by the priests and Levites" (*Horne*). "From xix. 1 we gather that it was written aft. the commencement of the monarchy, and fr. i. 21 that it was written bef. the access. of David: consequently its prob. date is the reign of Saul" (*Litton*; in this view *Delitzsch* concurs). **III. Time.** "It comprises the hist. of ab. 300 yrs." (*Horne*), or acc. to some (*Hales*) 400 yrs. "There is great dif. in settling the precise chronology of the several facts related in the Book of Jud., because many of them are reckoned fr. dif. eras, which cannot now be exactly ascertained" (*Horne*). **IV. Scope.** "The author himself states (ii. 11—23) the object he had in view—viz., to prove that the calamities wh. the people suffered were the consequences of their unfaithfulness to the covenant, and to set forth the goodness of God, so strikingly manifested in His readiness to accept their repentance, and to grant deliverance" (*Litton*). "This hist. abundantly verifies the frequent warnings and predictions of Moses; acc. to wh. the people, being under the immediate gov. of God, were in the most exemplary manner to be rewarded for their obedience, and punished for their disobedience, and esp. for their conformity to the religions of their neighbours, whom God had devoted to destruction on acc. of their polytheism and idolatry" (*Priestley*). **V. Characteristics.** "Other portions of Scrip. may be more profitable" for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness; "but for merely human interest—for the lively touches of ancient manners—for the succession of romantic incidents—for the consciousness that we are living face to face with the persons described—for the tragical pathos of events and characters—there is nothing like the hist. of the Juds. fr. Othniel to Eli. No portion of the Heb. Scrips., whether by its actual date or by the vividness of its representations, brings us so near to the times described; and on none has more light been thrown by the German scholar, to whose investigations we owe so much in the study of the Older Dispensation" (*Stanley*). "From the accounts in this bk. originated prob. the ingenious fictions mentioned in profane hist., such as the story of the *Sabine rape;* of *Nisus' hair*, and the *golden lock* given to Pterelaus by Neptune; that of *Hercules* and *Omphale;* of the *pillars of Hercules;* of the death of *Cleomedes Astypalæus;* and of *Agamemnon* and *Iphigenia*" (*Dr. Gray*). "Regarded naturally as only a chapter in the national history, the Bk. of Judges represents the efforts made by the people in the development of what afterwards became a monarchy. Moses and Joshua had been kings in everything but the name; Abimelech endeavoured, but with only partial success, to convert the judgeship of his father Gideon into an hereditary monarchy, and the bk. which carries on the history of the judges shows us how the kingdom of Saul found its root in the supreme judicial power of Samuel" (*Rev. Stanley Leathes, M.A.*).

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

I. State of Israel af. d. of Joshua, till they beg. to turn aside fr. serving the Lord ..... i.—iii. 4

II. Hist. of oppressions of Israel and deliv. by the Judges iii. 5—xvi.

1. Subj. to Mesopotamia, and deliv. by Othniel ..... iii. 5—11
2. Subj. to Moab, and deliv. by Shamgar iii. 12—31
3. Oppress. by Jabin, and deliv. by Deborah and Barak ..... iv.—v.
4. Subj. to Midian and deliv. by Gideon, etc. vi.—ix.
5. Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon ..... x.—xii.
6. Samson ..... xiii.—xvi.

III. Acc. of intro. of idolatry and its consequences ..... xvii.—xxi.

1. Idol of Micah, etc. ..... xvii., xviii.
2. Sin, etc., of Benjamites ..... xix.—xxi.

(*According to Litton*).

PART I.—**National decline** ..... i.—iii.

PART II.—**Exploits of Judges** iii.—xvi.

PART III.—**Appendix.**

1. Hist. of Micah ..... xvii., xviii.
2. The Benjamites ..... xix.—xxi.

(*According to Delitzsch.*)

I.—Introduction ..... i.—iii. 6

II.—Hist. of Judges ..... iii. 7—xvi. 31

1. Othniel ..... iii. 7—11
2. Ehud ..... iii. 12—30
3. Deborah, Barak ..... iv., v.
4. Gideon, etc. ..... vi.—x. 1—5
5. Jephthah, etc. ..... x. 6—xii. 8—15
6. Samson ..... xiii.—xvi.

III. Twofold Appendix.

1. Micah ..... xvii., xviii.
2. Benjamites ..... xix.—xxi.

Addenda.—There were fourteen Judges (fifteen including Josh., who is not usually numbered with the Judges) who were raised up under extraordinary circumstances to govern Israel, during a period of "*about* 450 yrs." (Ac. xiii. 20). The chronology of this period is very obscure. "The doubt has been raised whether the numbers given in the Judges are properly consecutive; and it has been supposed that some of the servitudes and of the judgeships were contemporaneous in diff. parts of the land." The foll., however, = 450 yrs. (*s.* = servitude, and *j.* = judge) :—I. *s.* to Mesopotamia = 8 yrs. ; i. *j. Othniel* = 40 yrs. II. *s.* to Moab = 18 ; ii. *j. Ehud*, and iii. *j. Shamgar* ; together = 80. III. *s.* to Jabin and Siserah = 20 ; iv. *j. Deborah* and *Barak* = 40. IV. *s.* to Midian = 7 ; v. *j. Gideon* = 40 ; vi. *j. Abimelech* = 3 ; vii. *j. Tola* = 23 ; viii. *j. Jair* = 22. V. *s.* to Ammon = 18 ; ix. *j. Jephthah* = 6 ; x. *j. Ibzan* = 7 ; xi. *j. Elon* = 10 ; xii. *j. Abdon* = 8. VI. *s.* to Philistines = 40 ; xiii. *j. Samson* = 20 ; xiv. *j. Eli* = 40. "The time covered according to the history is as follows :—Crushan, 8 years ; Othniel, 40 ; Eglon, 18 ; Ehud, 80 ; Jabin, 20 ; Deborah, 40 : in all 206 years. Then we have, under Midian, etc., 7 years ; Gideon, 40 ; Abimelech, 3 ; Tola, 23 ; Jair, 22 : in all 95 years. Servitude under Philistines, etc., 18 years ; under Jephthah, 6 ; Ibzan, 7 ; Elon, 10 ; Abdon, 8 ; under the Philistines again, 40 ; under Samson, 20 ; in all 109 years. Total, 410 years, which, with the judgship of Eli, 40 years, brings the period of the Judges to 'about the space of 450 years till Samuel' (Acts xiii. 20)."—*Rev. Stanley Leathes, M.A.*

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Judah and Simeon renew the war.

a Nu. xxvii. 21.

b Ge. xiii. 7, xxxiv. 30.

c 1 Sa. xi. 8.

d "The name announces itself as an appellative derived fr. the character of the region, it designates *unfruitful, stony sand areas.* The land W. of Dead Sea, thro' w h. Judah marched into his territory, is for the most part of this character." —*Lange.*

v. 1. *Dr. E. Challoner, Ss.* 173.

vv. 1, 2. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 369. See also *L. H. Wiseman, M.A., Men of Faith.*

e Dr. J. Burns.

f Dr. W. Arnot.

Adoni-bezek requited

a "Thumbs were cut off to incapacitate the hand fr. using the bow; great toes to render the gait uncertain."—*Lange.*

b Le. xxiv. 19, 20; De. xix. 21.

c Jos. xv. 62; Ju. xix. 10—12; 2 Sa. v. 6—9.

d Dr. Parker.

vv. 6, 7. *W. Jay, Short Disc.* ii. 339.

v. 7. *J. Mede,* Wks. i 188; *Bp. Kidder, Ss.* 62.

"The loss of the great toe would impede his speed, which was one of

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—4. (1) **after the death of Joshua,** comp. Jos. i. 1, wh. is here imitated as a formula, the events summarised up to ch. ii. 9, occurred *before* the death of Joshua, and are a recapitulation by way of introduction. **asked the Lord,** by Urim and Thummim, thro' the high priest,[a] already narrated, Jos. xiv. 6—15. (2) **go up,** fr. Gilgal into the hill country. **land,** the district comprising his lot. (3) **unto Simeon,** whose lot was within that of Judah, Jos. xix. 1, 2. (4) **Perizzites,**[b] prob. dwellers in scattered villages. **Bezek,**[c] apparently applied to a district rather than to a town.[d]

Cruelty's retribution (*v.* 7).—Observe—I. The ruthless influences of the war-spirit. II. That God sees the conduct of men in their career of cruelty. III. He often inflicts a just and terrible retribution.[e]

Disbelief in future retribution.—To disbelieve it is not to destroy the fact. Even in Scotland—the narrow end of an island nowhere very broad—I have met with persons well advanced in life, of good common education, and good common sense, who had never seen the sea. Suppose that these persons should have cause greatly to dread the sea, and should therefore ardently desire that there were no such thing in existence. Suppose further that, in the common way of the world, the wish should become father to the thought, and that they at last should firmly believe that there is not a sea. Would their sentiments change the state of the fact? Sinners, to whom the name and nature of a place of punishment are disagreeable, have no more power to annihilate the object of their aversion than the shepherds of the Cheviots to wipe out the sea by a wish. The sea is near these men, though they have never seen it; and if they were cast into it, they would perish, notwithstanding their opinion.[f]

5—8. (5) **found,** took by surprise. **Adoni-bezek,** lord, or king, of Bezek. (6) **cut off thumbs,**[a] *etc.*, a barbarity unusual with Israelites, a designed retribution for his cruelties.[b] (7) This verse tells of intestine wars among the petty kings of Canaan, weakening them before the attack of Israel. **God,** the *Deity*, he speaks wholly in the spirit of heathenism. **brought him to Jerus.,** it is difficult to decide whether Jerus. was at this time in the hands of Israel. (8) **had fought,** orig. simply says *fought*, not implying as our vers. that it had been previously taken.[c]

The law of requital (*v.* 7).—As I have done, so God hath requited me; then—I. The life of man cannot escape the judgment of God. II. Let no man take the law into his own hands. III. Every good deed will be honoured with appropriate reward. IV. Though justice be long delayed, yet it will be vindicated eventually.[d]

Retribution in this life.—Bajazet was carried about by Tamerlane in an iron cage, as he intended to have carried Tamerlane. Mazentius built a bridge to entrap Constantine, and was overthrown himself on that very spot. Alexander VI. was poisoned by the wine which he had prepared for another. Charles IX. made the streets of Paris run with Protestant blood, and soon after blood streamed from all parts of his body. Cardinal Beaton

condemned George Wishart to death, and presently died a violent death himself; he was murdered in bed, and his body was laid out in the same window from which he had looked upon Wishart's execution.

9—15. (9) Comp. Jos. xi. 16. (10—15) Comp. Jos. xiv. 6—15, xv. 13—19, in which this passage is almost exactly given.

Forlorn hope.—Military and civil writers of the present day seem quite ignorant of the true meaning of the expression "forlorn hope." The adjective has nothing to do with despair, nor the substantive with the "charmer which lingers still behind;" there was no such poetical depth in the words as originally used. Every corps marching in an enemy's country had a small body of men at the head (*haupt* or hope, or perhaps *haufen*, a troop) of the advanced guard, and which was termed the "forelorn hope" ("lorn" being here but a termination similar to "ward" in "forward"), while another small body at the head of the rear-guard was called the "rear-lorn hope."—See *A Treatise of Ireland*, by John Dymmok, p. 32, written about the year 1600, and printed by the Irish Archæological Society in 1843. A reference to Johnson's dictionary proves that civilians were misled, as early as the time of Dryden, by the mere sound of a technical military phrase, and in process of time even military men forgot the true meaning of the words. It grieves me to sap the foundations of an error to which we are indebted for Byron's beautiful phrase: "Full of hope, misnamed forlorn."[a]

16—21. (16) **Kenite,** *i.e.* Jethro. Kenites were a tribe which dwelt in the grottoes abounding S. of Palestine.[a] **city of palm trees,** Jericho;[b] no record of their occupying the site of the ruins is given, but nothing is more likely. **Arad,** Nu. xxi. 1, xxxiii. 40; Jos. xii. 14. **among the people,** of Judah. (17) **Hormah,** a name fixed on Zephath in connection with a vow.[c] (18) **Gaza,** *etc.*, comp. Jos. xi. 22, xiii. 3, xv. 45—47. (19) **mountain,** hill district. **valley,** lowlands. **chariots of iron,** Jos. xvii. 16. (20) Comp. Jos. xiv. 12—15. (21) Stated of Judah in Jos. xv. 63.

What hinders the Gospel? (*v.* 19: see also Ro. i. 18).—What hinders the Gospel? I can find the chief, if not the whole, obstruction in one word—*malrepresentation:* a holding of "the truth of God in unrighteousness." Our first text (Jud. i. 19) contains two truths well suited to guide us here. (1) That the great God frequently makes human agency the condition of His own action; (2) That so entirely does He abide by this plan, that if the required agency is not put forth, He will not work. Three general remarks may show that there has been sufficient malrepresentation to account for the Gospel's present limited influence. Consider that the Gospel regards—I. The ceremonial as subordinate to the doctrinal. And therefore *ritualistic* displays a mal-representation of the Truth. II. The doctrinal as subservient to the ethical. And if so, a mere *theological* manifestation is a malrepresentation. III. The true ethical as embodied in the life of Christ. And hence a mere dry *legal* manifestation is a malrepresentation.[d]

Retribution in this life.—About fifty years ago there lived a gentleman owner of a small property on the Welsh coast: Though a landowner, he was the leader of a band of wreckers, and had

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the qualifications of a warrior."—*Spk. Comm.*

Caleb, Othniel, and Achshah

"Collision is as necessary to produce virtue in men as it is to elicit fire in inanimate matter; and chivalry is the essence of virtue."—*Ld. J. Russell.*

"The age of chivalry has gone, and one of calculators and economists has succeeded."—*E. Burke.*

a Remains of Dr. Graves, of Dublin.

further successes of Judah

failure of Benjamin

a Nu. xxiv. 21, 22. *b* De. xxxiv. 3. *c* Nu. xiv. 45, xxi. 1—3; De. i. 44. *d Dr. Thomas.*

"Our humiliations work out our most elevated joys. The way that a drop of rain comes to sing in the leaf that rustles in the top of the tree all summer long is by going down to the roots first, and from thence ascending to the bough."—*Beecher.*

"A week filled up with selfishness, and the Sabbath stuffed full of religious exercises, will make a good Pharisee, but a poor Christian. There are many persons who

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think Sunday is a sponge with which to wipe out the sins of the week. Now, God's altar stands from Sunday to Sunday; and the seventh day is no more for religion than any other. It is for rest. The whole seven are for religion; and one of them for rest." —*Beecher.*

been the means of bringing many a vessel to destruction in order to enrich himself with the spoils cast on the shore. One evening he heard that a Spanish trader was in sight and in distress. Immediately the false beacon fires were lit, and the poor seamen, thinking they were friendly guides, steered for them, and came in right among the breakers, where she was soon dashed to pieces. The wicked wrecker went down to the sea-side, and the first dead body he saw on the shore, his face turned up and the moon shining full upon him, was his only son, to whom he was deeply attached. Unknown to the father he had embarked on board this ship for home, little thinking that his own father would be his murderer; who indeed would rather, if he had had the choice, have perished himself.

Joseph takes Bethel

Luz founded

22—26. (22) **house of Joseph,** Jos. xvi. 1. **Bethel,** Ge. xii. 8, xxviii. 19. (23) **descry,** lay close siege to by setting watchers around. (24) **entrance,** readiest mode of access; undefended points. (25) **the man,** they had forced to betray the city. (26) **Luz,** a new *Luz*, prob. in N. of Palestine, on the borders of Syria.[a]

a Jos. i. 4; 1 Ki. x. 29; 2 Ki. vii. 6.

"Is there not some chosen curse, some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven, red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man which owes his greatness to his country's ruin!" —*Addison.*

"There is no traitor like him whose domestic treason plants the poniard within the breast which trusted to his truth."—*Byron.*

A traitor's reward.—The Duke of Buckingham, having by an unfortunate accident lost the army which he had raised against Richard III., was forced to flee for his life without page or attendant; at last he took refuge in the house of Humphrey Bannister, at Shrewsbury, who, being one of his servants, and having been formerly raised by him from a low condition, would, he trusted be ready to afford him every possible protection. Bannister, however, upon the king's proclamation, promising £1,000 reward to him that should apprehend the duke, betrayed his master to John Merton, high sheriff of Shropshire, who sent him under a strong guard to Salisbury, where the king then was, by whom he was condemned to be beheaded. But on demanding the £1,000 that was the price of his master's blood, King Richard refused to pay it, saying, "He that would be false to so good a master, ought not to be encouraged." He was afterwards hanged for manslaughter; his eldest son soon fell into a state of derangment, and died in a hog-sty; his second son became deformed and lame; his third son was drowned in a small pool of water, and the rest of his family perished miserably.

Failure of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, and Asher.

"A failure establishes only this, that our determination to succeed was not strong enough."—*Howe.*

"He only is exempt from failures who makes no efforts."—*Whately.*

"Success is full of promise till men get it, and

27—32. (27) **Bethshean,** Jos. xvii. 11, 16. **Taanach,** Jos. xii. 21. **Dor,** Jos. xi. 2. xii. 23. **Ibleam,** Jos. xvii. 11. **Megiddo,** Jos. xii. 21. (28) **tribute,** a subjection only maintained while Israel was united and strong. (29) **Gezer,** Jos. x. 33. (30) **Kitron,** poss. *Kattath*, Jos. xix. 15; for this see **Nahaloi.** (31) **Accho,** seaport town, 30 miles S. of Tyre. **Zidon,** Jos. xi. 8. **Ahlab,** nowhere mentioned. **Achzib,** Jos. xix. 29. **Helbah,** prob. *Hebel*, Jos. xix. 29. **Aphik,** *Aphek* of Jos. xix. 30. **Rehob,** Jos. xxi. 31. (32) Obs. indic. that Canaanites were the stronger.

Failures in the great campaign.—I. Judah (*v.* 19). II. Judah (*v.* 21). III. Manasseh. IV. Ephraim. V. Zebulun. VI. Asher. VII. Naphtali (*v.* 33). VIII. Dan (*vv.* 34, 35). Difficult war all along the line,—enemy jubilant,—Israel demoralised,—but a God of Providence still watching over His people.

Failure—a practical lesson.—It is far from being true, in the progress of knowledge, that after every failure we must recom-

mence from the beginning. Every failure is a step to success; every detection of what is false directs us towards what is true; every trial exhausts some tempting form of error. Not only so; but scarcely any attempt is entirely a failure; scarcely any theory, the result of steady thought, is altogether false; no tempting form of error is without some latent charm derived from truth.[a]

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then it is a last year's nest, from which the bird has flown."—*Beecher.*

a Whewell.

33—36. (33) **Bethshemesh,** comp. Jos. xix. 38, 41. **Beth-anath,** Jos. xix. 38. (34) **Amorites,** Ge. x. 16. (35) **mount Heres,** poss. the *Ir-shemesh* of Jos. xix. 41. (35) **hand of Joseph,** we have no other record of this aid being given. (36) **coast,** border. **going up to Akrabbim,** Nu. xxxiv. 4; Jos. xv. 3; the ascent of scorpions. **the rock,**[a] *Has-selah, Petra,* the capital of Idumea. **upward,** *i.e.* northward.

failure of Naphtali and Dan

a "So called from the mass of precipitous rock which encloses the town, and out of wh. many of its buildings are excavated."—*Spk. Comm.*

Excuse for bad company.—A young man, a professor of religion, dressed himself elaborately for a ball. "Can you reconcile it with your views of duty?" asked his room-mate. "I am going from a sense of duty," said the young man. "Does your copy of the Bible read, 'be ye conformed to this world'?" "No, but I go because it will give me an opportunity of speaking with some in regard to their salvation." "We are never to transgress a positive command that we may do good." "Something must be done for the fashionable portion of society. We can do nothing for them if we never come in contact with them." The young man went to the ball. Whether, at the intervals of dancing, he spent his time in inviting the thoughtless to serious reflection, and in warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, I do not know. The strong probability is that he did not. The above fact is a striking illustration of the excuse made by many for transgressing the law: "Be not conformed to this world." In the case thus stated, the unsoundness of the excuse is very clearly seen. It is no less unsound in cases where the absurdity is less clearly apparent. The real motive is the love of the world—the love of sin: the excuse is a mere pretence.

"Sin is like sound, and it finds the moral nature of man, like the atmosphere, a good conducting medium."—*Rev. W. Arnot.*

"The freer you feel yourself in the presence of another, the more free is he."—*Lavater.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—5. (1) **angel of the Lord,** not a prophet, but God present in symbol of angelic form.[a] **from Gilgal,** so reminding of the renewal of covenant there.[b] **Bochim,** so named fr. this incident: meaning *the weepers;* LXX. places it near Bethel. **never break,** unfaithfulness cannot be charged to Him. (2) **league,** covenant, De. vii. 2, 5, xii. 3. **why,** *etc.,* appeal designed to arouse conscience. (3) Render, *I have now said, etc.*[c] **thorns,** *etc.,* Nu. xxxiii. 55. (4, 5) Signs of anxiety, conviction, and penitence.

rebuke of the angel at Bochim

a Ex. xxiii. 20; Jos. v. 14.

b Jos. v. 2—11.

c "I now protest, and declare."—*Gesenius.*

The danger of indecision.—Consider—I. The danger of indecision. We should—1. Not associate with worldly men; 2. Not be deeply immersed in the cares or pleasures of the world; 3. Harbour no besetting sins; 4. Listen to none of Satan's temptations. II. The duty of those convicted of it. 1. Humiliation of soul before God; 2. Application to God through the medium of sacrifice.[d]

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"St. Austin in his youth was in the habit of praying against lust and uncleanness, and secretly desired that God would not hear him. How many nowadays, like

Death and sorrow in sin.—The tale of the goblet which the genius of a heathen fashioned was true, and taught a moral of

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which many a death-bed furnishes the melancholy illustration. Having made the model of a serpent, he fixed it in the bottom of the cup. Coiled for the spring, a pair of gleaming eyes in its head, and in its open mouth fangs raised to strike, it lay beneath the ruby wine. Nor did he who raised that golden cup to quench his thirst, and quaff the delicious draught, suspect what lay below, till, as he reached the dregs, that dreadful head rose up, and glistened before his eyes. So, when life's cup is nearly emptied, and sin's last pleasure quaffed, and unwilling lips are draining the bitter dregs, shall rise the ghastly terrors of remorse and death and judgment upon the despairing soul. Be assured, a serpent lurks at the bottom of guilt's sweetest pleasure.[c]

him, pray against sin, but desire not to be heard, because of the inward secret love which they have to some particular habituated sins!"—*Anon.*

[c] *Dr. Guthrie.*

tomb of Joshua

a new generation and its sin

6—10. (6) **let the people go,** Jos. xxiv. 28. (7) **outlived,** prolonged days after Josh. (8) Jos. xxiv. 29, 30. **servant of the Lord,** Moses' title, De. xxxiv. 5. (9) **buried him,** places of sepulture highly honoured in the East. (10) **knew not the Lord,** by immediate experiences of His power.

Man.—This fragment of ancient history gives us several facts concerning our race. I. The moral obligation of every member of our race. All creatures serve God; but some—1. Without a will: inanimate matter, insentient life; 2. With their will: brutes, with their instinct; 3. Against their will: wicked men, fallen angels; 4. By their will: saints and angels. One condition indispensable to this last—viz., supreme love for Him as the Sovereign. This will—(1) Induce man to attain to an understanding of His law. (2) Prompt him cheerfully to obey it. II. The service of one good man to our race. 1. A man can induce his race to serve the Lord; 2. To do this, he must himself be God's servant; 3. However useful a man may be, he must die. III. The melancholy succession of our race. 1. The succession involves no extinction: man's soul immortal; 2. Its mode involves a moral cause. IV. The degenerating tendency of our race. This tendency—1. Is often stronger than truth's most elevating influences; 2. Indicates the necessity of a conscious reliance upon the gracious help of God.[a]

v. 7. *J. Frost, Ss.* 285; *Bp. Sherlock, Wks.* iii. 473.

[a] *Dr. Thomas.*

The tomb of Joshua.—This is certainly the most striking monument in the country, and strongly recommends itself to the mind as an authentic site. That it is the sepulchre of a man of distinction is manifest from the great number of lamp niches which cover the walls of the porch: they are over 200, arranged in vertical rows, . . and all smoke-blacked. One can well imagine the wild and picturesque appearance presented at any time when the votive lamps were all in place, and the blaze of light shone out of the wild hill-side, casting long shadows from the central columns. The present appearance of the porch is also very picturesque, with the dark shadows and bright light, and the trailing boughs which droop from above.[b] The tomb is a square chamber, with five excavations on three of its sides, the central one forming a passage leading into a second chamber beyond. Here is a single cavity, with a niche for a lamp; and here, there is good reason to believe, is the resting-place of the warrior chief of Israel.

"Like as if a poor man should be commanded by a prince to put off his ragged garments, and put on costly royal robes, it would be a great rejoicing in his heart; so much more joyful news must this be to all repentant sinners, when the King of heaven comes to them by death, and bids them lay down their patched garments, and put on the princely robe of immortality. No tongue can express the excellency of this most blessed and happy estate."—*Cawdray.*

[b] *Lieut. Conder.*

apostasy of Israel and its consequences

11—15. (11) Begins incidents taking place after death of Josh. **Baalim,** plural of *Baal;* see v. 13. (12) **bowed themselves,** in worship as to Deity. (13) **Ashtaroth,** plural form

of Astarte, or Ashtoreth, the female deity.[a] (14) **hot,** Ps. cvi. 39, 40. **spoilers,** fr. root, *rob,* 2 Ki. xvii. 20.[b] **sold them,** De. xxxii. 30; Ps. xliv. 12. (15) **against them,** contrast Jos. i. 9. **sworn,** Le. xxvi. 37; De. xxviii. 25.

The promise broken.—I. Temptation—from people around: they were idolaters. People daily saw idol-worship. No doubt were invited to join. Especially they saw idol-festivals, with their excitement. They had wilfully and sinfully put themselves in the way of these temptations. Do we do so now? Can we expect God to keep us if we wilfully get into the way of evil? II. Yielding. This they would not have done if they had kept heart-true to God. That is the secret of walking through the world, and not spotting the garments. III. Consequences. Present pleasure: short-lived, however, ending in bitter sorrows.[c]

Keeping bad company.—In the year 1832, died in Essex, England, under very painful circumstances, a young man who had once promised to be happy and useful. He was apprenticed to a respectable shopkeeper, who insisted on his always being at home by a certain hour in the evening. For some time he appeared very attentive to his business, and was useful to his master; but he unhappily acquired the habit of walking about the streets of an evening, and soon after formed very improper connections at a public-house. He was seriously admonished, and at times appeared to feel the impropriety of his conduct, but the sins he cherished hardened his heart, and his irregularities became confirmed. At length his master, on returning from a journey, heard complaints of his conduct, which led him to threaten that unless his conduct was altered, he would cancel his indentures. He now felt that his sins were hastening him to the ruin against which he had often been warned; he had lost alike the confidence of his master and his parents. Stung by the convictions of his guilt he repaired to his room, when he knew that he would be expected to dinner, and committed suicide; thus rushing into the presence of his Judge uncalled, and every way unprepared. Who can conceive the acuteness of his anguish, when he found himself in the presence of that God whose laws he had trampled under his feet, but from whose wrath he found it impossible to escape![d]

16—19. (16) **judges,** *Shophetim,* combining military leadership with civil rule, and beginning authority with an act of national deliverance. (17) **not hearken,** sufficiently to return to permanent obedience. **their fathers,** *i.e.* the generation led by Joshua. (18) **Lord was with,** as with Moses and Josh., the secret source of all power and success. **it repented,**[a] only part of the idea of repentance can be applied to God. (19) **ceased not,** Heb. let nothing fall of their own doings.

Mission and success of the Judges.—I. Their office must not be confounded with that of subordinate functionaries whom Moses appointed to administer justice in the wilderness. II. Their functions may be partly understood by referring to the position in which Moses and Joshua stood in relation to the twelve tribes. III. Their times were, on the whole, marked by national advancement. IV. Note the spiritual or typical interpretation of these narratives of the Judges.[b]

A ruler's duty.—Philip, king of Macedon, being importuned by a poor widow to do her justice, answered that he was not at

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a "The plural form may mean *images* of the goddess, or it may imply that she was worshipped at different places under some different aspects or modifications."—*Ayre.*

b "The *shosim* are enemies of the property of another, robbers, plunderers."—*Lange.*

v. 14. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 380.

c *Hive.*

Many resolutions are like impressions made on the sand, the first wave washes them away.

When the believer is tempted to commit some sin, how often does the bitter experience of the past keep him from it! The burnt child dreads the fire.

d *K. Arvine.*

judges are raised up and Israel delivered

a Ps. cvi. 34, 35.

v. 18. *T. Bradbury, Ss.* i. 197.

b *L. H. Wiseman, M.A.*

Shun all the byways of sin; keep to the good old paths of Christian doctrine and duty; look well to the ancient landmarks which Christ has set up; and in due time

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your portion will be eternal glory.

"It is to be lamented that great characters are seldom without a blot."—*Washington.*

leisure; to whom she replied, "Then cease to be a king, for to do justice is the very reason why you are a king at all." Hearing this, he felt so much the force of the rebuke, that he took care of her cause immediately. Lord, Thou requirest of us that we should do Thee service, and we are sometimes tempted to say we cannot attend to it; but it may well be replied to us, then cease to live; above all, cease your spiritual life, for therefore gavest Thou us our natural life and our new life, that we might lay them out in Thy service.

20—23. (20) This *v.* continues the narrative fr. *v.* 13.[a] (21) **drive out any,** the further fulfilment of His promise was stopped. (22) **prove Israel,** test, try, with idea of doing it through sufferings. (23) **hastily,** suddenly, and entirely, at the first invasion.

God is angry with Israel

[a] "Intermediate *vv.* are an interruption of the sense, refer to much later times, and appear to be reflections of the compilor."—*Spk. Comm.*

[b] *L. H. Wiseman, M.A.*

[c] *Dr. Beaumont.*

"For many miles around Swansea no vegetation exists, owing to the smoke from the large copper-works there; even so, the influence of bad companions prevents man flourishing in the Divine life."—*Rev T. Jones.*

The angel at Bochim (note on whole cap.).—I. The command to extirpate the Canaanites explicit and often repeated. II. The people were disobedient. 1. The Canaanites represent the enemies of the Church, and the inward besetting sins of its members; 2. Our warfare is not completed when we partake of peace through believing; 3. Many stop short of full salvation; 4. The history illus. the causes of weakness in the Church. (1) Indolence; (2) Secret love of sin; (3) Unbelief. III. A terrible series of penalties were the consequences of Israel's unfaithfulness.[b]

Learning from company.—As there is no book out of which a man may not gather something for his good; so there is no company so bad but a wise man may learn something to make himself better. So admirably hath God disposed of the ways of men, that even the sight of vice in others is like a warning arrow, shot for us to take heed. We should correct our own faults by seeing how uncomely they appear in others: who will not abhor a choleric passion, and a saucy pride in himself, that sees how ridiculous and contemptible they render those who are infested with them![c]

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nations left to prove Israel

[a] Nu. xiii. 21, xxxiv. 3.

"Many a day have I sought death with tears; not out of impatience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it."—*Cowper.*

"National enthusiasm is the great nursery of genius."—*Tuckerman.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) **left,** more or less established in the land, some unsubdued, some paying tribute. **not known,** *etc.*, showing reference to be to generation succeeding that led by Josh. (2) First clause should read, "*that He might know the generations of the children of Israel.*" Know by *proving.* **war,** their situation might demand *defensive* war, for wh. they must be prepared. (3) **Philistines,** Ge. xxi. 32. **Hamath,** extreme N. boundary of Canaan.[a] (4) **prove,** Ju. ii. 22.

Geographical position of Palestine.—Palestine was always an isolated country. It lay like a bridge leading from the Euphrates to the Nile, with a desert on one side and a sea on the other; in the very midst of the region of west Asiatic culture, yet isolated from and unaffected by it. No other country had a similar position. No other lay like it in the immediate neighbourhood of the six most illustrious, cultivated nations of the ancient world, the Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Phœnicians, and Egyptians; and yet in their very midst, divided from them by Nature herself, in order to secure to this country its own complete opposition, its own altogether peculiar culture, its monotheism, its

grand spiritual independence. None lay thus so intimately connected with each of the three continents in their points of contact, and with the five arms of the sea, reaching far inland, thus early showing the paths prepared for the fulness of time, when the Gospel should be ready to be despatched from this common centre, in every direction to the ends of the world.[b]

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b Carl Ritter.

5—8. (5) Comp. Ex. xxxiii. 2. **dwelt among,** instead of driving them out utterly. (6) **took . . sons,** a distinct and most wilful breach of the covenant. (7) **and the groves,** Heb. *Asherah,*[a] comp. De. xvi. 21. The symbol or image of the goddess *Ashtoreth.*[b] (8) **Chushan-rishathaim,**[c] either *most wicked Cushite,* or *lord of the land of the two rivers.* **Mesopotamia,** *Aram-Naharaim,* Ge. 8—11.

Israel intermarries with Canaan

a 2 Ki. xvii. 10.

b Smith's Dic. of Bible.

c The only invader fr. the remote East till the decline of the monarchy, and his name has as yet received no illustration fr. the Assyrian monuments or history." — *Stanley.*

Ashteroth.— Groves.—The name of this deity occurs earlier in the Bible than that of any other (Ge. xiv. 5). Ashteroth was the principal female deity of the old Canaanites, as Baal was the principal male deity. The moon was her symbol. Hence the name of that primeval city of the Rephaim, *Ashteroth-karnaim,* "the two-horned Ashteroth;" that is, as I actually found the goddess represented on a colossal bas-relief in Bashan, a female with a crescent moon on her forehead. The Hebrew *Ashteroth,* the Egyptian Athor, and the Greek Astarte, symbolised productive power. She was the universal mother, or producer. She presided over all productiveness, both in the animal and vegetable world. Her worship, under the guidance of sensuality, came to be connected with the most licentious rites. Her sanctuaries were dens of infamy. By such orgies her power was supposed to be propitiated. This form of idolatry tended, like others, to the utter degradation of human nature. Ashteroth is called by Jeremiah (viii. 18) "queen of heaven," and he describes Hebrew women as offering cakes to her in the streets of Jerusalem.

"Every sin has a Satan in it, and robs the soul of its beauty. Every sin hath robbery in it. It is an endeavour to carry away some one or other of the crown jewels of heaven." — *Haliburton.*

9—11. (9) **Othniel,**[a] Jos. xv. 16—19; Ju. i. 13; one of the contemporaries of Joshua. (10) **spirit,** *etc.,* as a spirit of warfare and of judgment. (11) **the land,** *i.e.* the district specially overrun by Chushan. **forty years,** poss. not intended to fix an exact number, but to stand for a generation.

Othniel

a "His military experience qualified him for the work, while the gallant exploits he was known to have performed gained him the full confidence of his countrymen in his ability as a leader." — *Jamieson.*

"The last of the generation of conquerors." — *Stanley.*

b Cowley.

Providential changes.—I have often observed that when the fulness and maturity of time is come that produces the great confusions and changes in the world, it usually pleases God to make it appear, by the manner of them, that they are not the effects of human force or policy, but of the Divine justice and predestination; and, though we see a man—like that which we call "Jack of the clock-house"—striking, as it were, the hour of that fulness of time, yet our reason must needs be convinced that his hand is moved by some secret and, to us that stand without, invisible direction.[b]

12—15. (12) **king of Moab,** an extensive portion of the ancient possessions of Moab were in hands of Is.; these Eglon sought opportunity to recover. (13) **Ammon, Amalek,** both bitter foes of Israel. Continually spoken of in conjunction with Moab. **city of palm-trees,**[a] Jericho; having subjected the eastern tribes, the enemy suddenly crossed the Jordan. (14) **served,** *v.* 8, were under tribute. (15) **Gera,** one of Benj.'s sons, Ge. xlvi. 21. **left-handed,** lit. *bound in, not able to use,*

Moab subdues Israel

Ehud

a Ju. i. 16.

"They established themselves at Gilgal

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and Jericho. But beyond the mountain barrier they do not go. Their dominion extended itself over the neighbouring tribe of Benjamin."—*Stanley.*

Acc. to LXX. Ehud was an *ambidexter*, i.e. able to use both hands with equal facility.

b Dr. Parker.

c Anthony Burgess.

his right hand; many such in this tribe, Ju. xx. 16. **present,** the tribute.

Ehud (*v.* 15).—The text shows—I. That *many* men may be dependent on *one* man. 1. He may move about more quickly; 2. He may be in a better position. II. That the instruments chosen of God may often surprise and disappoint men. Ehud left-handed. 1. A man not great merely because left-handed. 2. No man should be condemned merely because he does not take hold of things in the common way. III. That some good use may be made of the most unlikely qualifications.[b]

Conscience no judge in religion.—When a man performeth that which his judgment calls upon him to do, he finds great serenity of mind, and is like the upper region, wherein turbulent meteors make no confusion; so that you must never judge of the truth of any way in religion, by the comfort and peace of conscience you find therein; for all Turks, Jews, papists, and heretics, have much quietness of conscience in discharging that traditional religion they are brought up in, and would be much troubled in conscience to deny or apostatise from their way, until their consciences be rectified out of God's Word.[c]

Ehud kills Eglon, king of Moab

16—20. (16) **dagger,** short sword. **two edges,**[a] customary way of sharpening. **right thigh,** sword being usually worn on the left side, this enabled Ehud to escape detection. (17) **fat man,** said to explain effectiveness of Ehud's attack. (18) **sent away,** going at first with them. (19) **quarries,** either well-known stone quarries near the place where Eglon was; or, as some think, *graven images,* statues of Moab. idols. (20) **summer parlour,** lit. *upper chamber of coolness.* Making as if to whisper, Ehud got close to the king.

A message from God unto man (*v.* 20).—Notice—I. The messenger. II. The message. To—1. The impenitent: "repent;" 2. The true believer: "be not weary;" 3. The tempted: "blessed is the man that endureth temptation;" 4. The afflicted: "pray;" 5. The almost Christian: "take heed;" 6. The poor ignorant man desiring to know the way of life. III. From whom the message comes: "from God." IV. To whom it is addressed: "unto thee."[b]

The secret errand.—From a circumstance mentioned by Mr. Bruce, it appears that Ehud acted in strict conformity to the customs of the time and place, so that neither the suspicion of the king nor his attendants should be excited by his conduct. It was usual for the attendants to retire when secret messages were to be delivered. "I drank a dish of coffee, and told him that I was a bearer of a confidential message from Ali Bey of Cairo, and wished to deliver it to him without witnesses whenever he pleased. The room was accordingly cleared without delay, excepting his secretary, who was also going away, when I pulled him back by the clothes, saying, 'Stay, if you please; we shall need you to write the answer.'"[c]

"Ev'n to the dullest peasant standing by, who fasten'd still on him a wondering eye, he seem'd the master-spirit of the land."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"Heroism—the Divine relation, which, in all times, unites a great man to other men."—*Carlyle.*

c Burder.

a A. S. *hæft, hæftan,* to take, seize.

b This explanation is adopted by *J. D. Michaelis,*

21—24. (21) **left hand,** so taking Eglon at unawares. (22) **haft,**[a] hilt or handle. (23) **porch,** where the entrance doors were. **parlour,** antechamber in which the courtiers might wait. (24) **gone out,** wh. he did with surprising calmness. **covereth his feet,** for sleep,[b] comp. 1 Sa. xxiv. 3.

The summer parlour.—Dr. Shaw tells us, their doors are large,

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and their chambers spacious; conveniences, as he observes, very well adapted to those hotter climates. But when Eglon is represented as receiving Ehud and Death, in a parlour of cooling, or rather in a chamber of cooling, something more seems to be meant than merely its having a large door, or being spacious; at least there are now other contrivances in the East, to give coolness to particular rooms, which are very common; and though the time in which Eglon lived, is acknowledged to be of very remote antiquity, yet we are to remember he was a prince, and in the palaces of such these contrivances without doubt began. Russell has given us the following account of one of their methods of cooling rooms. Their great houses at Aleppo are composed of apartments on each of the sides of a square court, all of stone; and consist of a ground floor, which is generally arched, and an upper story, which is flat on the top, and either terraced with hard plaster, or paved with stone; above-stairs is a colonnade, if not round the whole court, at least fronting the west, off from which are their rooms and kiosques; these latter are a sort of wooden divans, that project a little way from their other buildings, and hang over the street; they are raised about a foot and a half higher than the floor of the room, to which they are quite open, and by having windows in front and on each side, there is a great draught of air, which makes them cool in the summer, the advantage chiefly intended by them.

Bp. Patrick, Spk. Comm., etc.

"They cannot account for the long closing of the door, except on the supposition that their lord had retired for purposes which Oriental delicacy reserves for seclusion."—*Stanley.*

"Death doth lurk always in life's delicious cup: the mulberry-leaf must bear the biting of a worm, that so it may be raised to wear its silken form."—*Ruckert.*

25—30. (25) **ashamed,** comp. 2 Ki. ii. 17, viii. 11. **a key,**[a] **an** opener, the chief officer would doubtless hold a duplicate key. (26) **Seirath,** "the forest bordering on the cultivated plain near Gilgal." (27) **mountain,** or hilly district. (28) **fords of Jordan,** those by Jericho, thus the enemy was intercepted and readily fell a prey. (29) **lusty,** fat like their king. (30) **the land,** the part occupied by tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin chiefly.

Ehud calls Israel to arms

a "Keys and locks in Palestine are very frequently now, and were, doubtless, in old time, large, and both of them made of wood. Ancient keys were crooked, bent into the shape of a sickle, and like it borne on the shoulder."—*Ayre.*

Ancient locks.—The wooden locks commonly used in Egypt. "consist of a long hollow piece of wood, fixed in the door, so as to slide backward and forward, which enters a hole made for it in the doorpost, and is there fastened by small bolts of iron wire, which fall from above into little orifices made for them in the top of the lock. The key is a long piece of wood, having at the end small pieces of iron wire of different lengths, irregularly fixed in, corresponding in number and direction with the bolts which fall into the lock; these it lifts upon being introduced into the lock, which it then pulls back. The bolts of wire differ in number from three to fourteen or fifteen, and it is impossible to guess at the number a lock contains, or at the direction in which they are placed."[b]

b Turner's Tour in the Levant.

31. Shamgar, not otherwise mentioned, poss. a contemporary of Jael.[a] As Beth-anath is in tribe of Naphtali, he may have been of that tribe.[b] **ox-goad,** instrument used by ploughmen. A strong pole 8 or 10 ft. long, with a point at one end to urge on the oxen, and a kind of chisel at the other to clear the ploughshare fr. earth and weeds, etc.

Shamgar

a Jud. v. 6.

b Smith's Dic.

Shamgar (v. 31).—Note—I. How absurd it is for any man to blame his tools for bad work—(ox-goad; jawbone of ass; sling and stone).—II. How important it is that men should use those instruments which they can handle most skilfully. III. How

"Do not ridicule the instrument. Look at the 600 dead men, at the slain giant, at the prostrate walls of Jericho. Rule applies to every department of

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life: to preaching, to missions, to every Christian effort."—*Dr. Parker.*

e Dr. Parker.

"The greatest obstacle to being heroic is the doubt whether one may not be going to prove oneself a fool; the truest heroism is to resist the doubt; and the profoundest wisdom to know when it ought to be resisted, and when to be obeyed."—*Hawthorne.*

d Maundrell.

foolish it would be to ridicule the instrument when the results are so obviously of God. IV. How victories are sometimes won in the face of the greatest improbabilities.[e]

The ox-goad.—"The country people were now everywhere at plough in the fields, in order to sow cotton. It was observable that in ploughing they used goads of an extraordinary size; upon measuring several, I found them about eight feet long, and at the bigger end six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, at the other end with a small spade, or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it in working. May we not from hence conjecture, that it was with such a goad as one of these, that Shamgar made that prodigious slaughter related of him, Judges iii. 21? I am confident that whoever should see one of these instruments would judge it to be a weapon not less fit, perhaps fitter, than a sword for such an execution. Goads of this sort I saw always used hereabouts, and also in Syria; and the reason is, because the same single person both drives the oxen, and also holds and manages the plough; which makes it necessary to use such a goad as is above described, to avoid the encumbrance of two instruments."[d]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

oppression under Jabin

a Ps. lxxviii. 56—58.

b Smith's Dict. Bib.

c Spk. Comm.; Stanley.

d Land and Book, pp. 285, 286.

e Land and Book, pp. 436, 437.

vv. 1–3. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* i. 386; *Noel Alexander, Hist. Eccles.* iii. 98.

f M. Henry.

1—3. (1) **did evil,**[a] in yielding to surrounding idolatry. (2) **sold them,** as in ch. ii. 14. **Jabin,** prob. hereditary name of kings of Hazor. Comp. Jos. xi. Either the two chiefs of name of Jabin were contemporaries,[b] or Hazor was rebuilt after its destruction by Joshua.[c] **Hazor,** city of Naphtali, near waters of Merom, Jos. xix. 36; poss. mod. *Hazere.*[d] **Harosheth,** not identified; Thomson thinks the double mound called Harothieh.[e] **of the Gentiles,** or nations, Is. ix. 1. Upper Galilee. (3) **chariots of iron,** Jos. xvii. 16. **oppressed,** word used Ex. iii. 9. Prob. Israelites were put by Jabin to task work in hewing timber.

Israel's sin and oppression.—Here is—I. Israel backsliding from God. See in this—1. The strange strength of corruption; 2. The common ill effects of a long peace; 3. The great loss which a people sustain by the death of good governors. II. Israel oppressed by their enemies. III. Israel returning to their God. Distress drives men to Him.[f]

Deborah sends for Barak

a Ex. xv. 22.

b "The spirit of Deborah was like a torch for Israel, kindling their languid hearts."—*Lange.*

c Ge. xxxv. 8.

d Jos. xix. 32, 35, 37, xx. 7, xxi. 32.

e "Barak is to

4—9. (4) **Deborah,** *a bee*, comp. Ge. xxiv. 59. **prophetess,** person thro' whom Divine communications were made, comp. Miriam,[a] and Huldah. **wife of Lapidoth,** or, a *woman of a fiery spirit, or of the torch-glow*;[b] lapidoth means firebrands, lamps, or flames. (5) **under the palm,** tent set up under well-known tree.[c] **Ramah,** prob. *Ramathaim-zophim.* **judgment,** of civil disputes. (6) **Barak,** *lightning*, He. xi. 32. **Kedesh-naphtali,** to distin. fr. town in Issachar.[d] **Lord God,** Jehovah God of the covenant. **draw,** or spread out.[e] **Tabor,** at N.E. corner of plain of Esdraelon. (7) **Kishon,** now Mukutta, stream issuing fr. Carmel.[f] (8) **go with me,** her presence would inspire the host. (9) **woman,** Jael, *vv.* 17—21.

Deborah (*vv.* 4—7).—I. Her lowly yet well-known dwelling. II. Her office, prophetess. God uses divers instruments. Pride

taken out of man by use of a woman. Women have often shamed men by their courage at critical times (Joan of Arc, Maid of Saragossa). III. Her influence; that of wisdom. Israel perceived that she was the mouthpiece of God. IV. Her knowledge. She knew Barak, the right man for the times. V. Her faith. Believed God would draw Sisera into the snare: believed the time of Israel's deliverance had come.—*Barak.*—I. His humility. Would not go without Deborah. II. His self-denial. Would go, even though not for his own honour. Note, such elements enter into the character of all real heroes.

The summit of Tabor.—Here we are, on the top of Tabor! Let us breathe our tired animals beneath this fine old oak at the entrance into the fortress. You observe that a fosse once protected the wall on all this part of the summit, because it is less precipitous than elsewhere. This narrow plot on the north side, I suppose, was levelled into its present shape, by the inhabitants of this ancient city, for gardens, or to make a hippodrome and parade-ground. South of this a rocky ridge rises some fifty feet higher, and the entire summit was surrounded by a heavy wall, strengthened with towers at suitable distances, and further defended by a ditch when needed. These works are obviously of very different ages; and history not only accounts for, but demands them. There was a town here, and no doubt fortified, at or before the time of Joshua. Here Barak and Deborah assembled the thousands of Naphtali to attack Sisera. And Tabor is never lost sight of, either by Hebrew historian or poet. It has, therefore, a story many times too long for us to repeat,—Canaanitish, Jewish, Græco-Macedonian, Roman, Christian, Saracenic, Frank, and Turk.[g]

10—13. (10) **at his feet,** following him, Ex. xi. 8, marg. **went up,** to meeting-place on Tabor. (11) Should read, *Heber had severed himself fr. childr. of Hobab.*[a] **Hobab,** Nu. x. 29—32. **Kenites,** Ge. xv. 19; Nu. xxiv. 21, 22. **plain,** oak or terebinth tree. **Zaanaim,** Jos. xix. 33. (12) **shewed,** reported to. (13) **gathered,** by cry, or proclamation; as marg. **from . . Kishon,** the entire plain of Esdraelon.

Heber the Kenite (*v.* 11).—I. A man descended from an idolatrous ancestry. II. A man who was saved the doom of his countrymen by a timely separation. III. A man who proved the sincerity of his conversion by the aid he rendered Israel.—*Sisera's hope* (*v.* 13).—Chariots of iron. I. He illustrates the vain confidences of those who make not the Lord their trust. Historical examples. II. He illustrates the fate of those whose dependence is in the creature. His own chariots made the confusion of his defeat the greater.

Men at his feet.—The phrase "men at his feet" did not, I believe, refer to any particular class of soldiers, but applied to all, whether they fought in chariots, on horses, or on foot. This form of speech is used in Eastern books to show how many obey or serve under the general. It may be taken from the action of a slave being prostrate at the feet of his master, denoting submission or obedience. In this way devotees, when addressing the gods, always speak of themselves as being at their feet. When the Orientals speak of his Majesty of Britain, they often allude to the millions who are at his feet. The governors, generals, or judges in the East, are said to have the people of such countries,

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gather 10,000 men toward Tabor, one after another, in small squads: the tyrant must know nothing of the rising until the hosts are assembled."—*Lange.*

f Ju. v. 21; 1 Ki. xviii. 40.

v. 4. *Dr. H. Hunter. Sac. Biog.* ix. 98. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Charac.* i. 296.

Tradition has fixed on this spot as the scene of the transfiguration of Christ, but the correctness of this opinion has been disputed by Dean Stanley and other writers.

g Thomson, Land and Book.

Barak and Sisera summon their armies

a Nu. x. 29; Ju. i. 16.

The transactions of Providence are not seen clearly at first; the painter at the first makes but a rough draught of his picture—first a hand, then an eye; but when he hath filled up every part and laid on his colours, it is beautiful to behold: we who live in this age of the Church see but a rough draught of God's Providence, but when we reach heaven, and see all the lineaments of God's Providence drawn out and completed, all will be perfection and wis-

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dom and mercy, —kindness and love will seal the whole.
b Roberts.

the army of Sisera routed
a "Word here rendered *discomfit*, is one spoken especially of God. See Ex. xiv. 24, xxiii. 27, Jos. x 10, etc."—*Spk. Comm.*
b Ge. xviii. 6, 10, xxiv. 67.
v. 14. *W. Reading, M.A., Ss.* i. 304.
"Wouldst thou know the lawfulness of the action which thou desirest to undertake, let thy devotion recommend it to Divine blessing; if it be lawful thou shalt perceive thy heart encouraged by thy prayer; if unlawful, thou shalt find thy prayer discouraged by thy heart. That action is not warrantable which either blushes to beg a blessing, or, having succeeded, dares not present a thanksgiving."—*Quarles.*
c Percy Anec.

Sisera is killed by Jael
a "It is an ancient practice, common to all Bedouins, Arabs, etc., that whosoever has eaten or drunk anything in the tent is received into the peace of the house. The Arab's mortal enemy slumbers securely in the tent of his adversary, if he have drunk with him."—*Lange.*
b "Though praised in the song, the eulogy must be con-

or armies, or districts, at their feet. Nay, it is common for masters, and people of small possessions, to speak of their domestics as being at their feet. It is therefore heard every day for "I will send my servants," *en-kăl-adiyila*, "those at my feet."[b]

14—17. (14) **went down,** though the plain gave great advantage to Sisera's chariots. A sudden onslaught ere Sisera was prepared for battle. (15) **discomfited,**[a] produced a panic. **off his chariot,** either bec. stuck fast in the morass, or fearing recognition if in it. (16) Sisera tries to get out of the regular course of flight. (17) **tent of Jael,** woman's tent[b] gave greater security.

Up, this is the day (*v.* 14).—Regard these words of Deborah as—I. A call to immediate action. Attack the enemy to-day. Delay is dangerous; if you delay you may be attacked instead. II. A double stimulant to courage. Barak's courage would be kept up by—1. Deborah's promise of success; 2. Her assurance of God's presence with him. III. Good advice for regulating our warfare with sin. Attack Satan now. Every moment lost weakens you and strengthens your already formidable adversary. Resist him now, and he will flee from you.

Decision and indecision contrasted.—When Gen. Suwaroff commanded, under the Prince of Coburg, on the frontiers of Turkey, he had an army of twenty-two thousand men. Coburg himself had thirty-seven thousand, and the Turks only twenty-eight thousand. Prince Coburg's army, which had taken a good position on a rising ground, about nine miles distant from Suwaroff, was attacked, and obliged to fall back. Coburg then wrote to Suwaroff, "I was attacked this morning by the Turks. I have lost my position and artillery. I send you no instructions what to do. Use your own judgment, only let me know what you have done as soon after as you can." Suwaroff immediately sent the following answer: "I shall attack the Turks to-morrow morning, drive them from your position, and retake your cannon." Before three o'clock in the afternoon, Suwaroff kept his word; and Coburg's army had the cannon and their old position before night.[c]

18—21. (18) **to meet Sisera,** tidings of battle seem to have reached her. **mantle,** rug, or coverlet. (19) **bottle,** made of skin; giving this was sign of friendliness.[a] (20) anxious about his safety, he set her on the watch. (21) **nail,** prob. a spare tent-pin, to wh. the ropes were fastened. **hammer,** the mallet used in driving pin into the ground. This was violation of hospitality, and murder.[b]

Sisera's death (*v.* 21).—The great commander dies—I. In his sleep: fast asleep and weary. Fettered in the chains of sleep, he could not resist. II. With his head nailed to the ground: an emblem of earthly-mindedness. III. By the hand of a woman. This added to the shame of his death before men.[c]

Butter in the East.—The method of making butter in the East illustrates the conduct of Jael, the wife of Heber, described in the Book of Judges: "And Sisera said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty: and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him." In the song of Deborah the statement is repeated: "He asked water, and she gave him milk, she brought forth butter in a lordly dish." The word (*hemah*) which our translators rendered butter, pro-

perly signifies cream; which is undoubtedly the meaning of it in this passage, for Sisera complained of thirst, and asked a little water to quench it, a purpose to which butter is but little adapted. Mr. Harmer, indeed, urges the same objection to cream, which, he contends, few people would think a very proper beverage for one that was extremely thirsty; and concludes that it must have been buttermilk which Jael, who had just been churning, gave to Sisera.[d]

22—24. (22) **whom thou seekest,** Barak wanted to complete his victory by putting to death, or taking prisoner, the general of the army. (23) **God subdued,** they must see past the secondary to the chief agent. (24) **prospered,** lit. as marg. "the hand of Israel went on, going on, and being hard." They followed up this first victory with further successes.

Lessons suggested by defeat of Sisera.—I. That which was the chief boast of the heathen oppressor, and the chief terror of Israel, proved to be one of the chief causes of Israel's salvation. and of the enemy's overthrow—chariots of iron. II. That faith is the highest reason. III. A type of the final overthrow of Satan. IV. An emblem of encouragement to ourselves in the daily struggle with evil.

Arab women.—The Arabs are not so scrupulous as the Turks about their women; and though they have their harem, or women's apartment, in the tent, they readily introduce their acquaintances into it, or those strangers whom they take under their special protection. Pococke's conductor, in his journey to Jerusalem, led him two or three miles to his tent, where he sat with his wife and others round a fire. The faithful Arab kept him there for greater security, the wife being always with him; no stranger ever daring to come into the women's apartment unless introduced. We discover in this custom, the reason of Jael's invitation to Sisera, when he was defeated by Barak: "Turn in, my lord, turn in to me, fear not." She invited him to take refuge in her own division of the tent, into which no stranger might presume to enter; and where he naturally supposed himself in perfect safety.[a]

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—5. (1) **sang Deborah,** she both composed the song, and led the singing. (2) **avenging,** De. xxxii. 42.[a] (3) **kings,** calling attention of the mighty ones among the nations, as Ps. ii. **I will sing,** word used indic. accompanying her song by playing on some instrument.[b] (4) **out of Seir,**[c] the march to take possession of Canaan commenced at Kadesh, by Seir. (5) **Sinai,** prob. here used as figure.[d]

God praised by a song (*v.* 1).—I. A very natural expression of rejoicing. II. A very proper expedient for spreading the knowledge and perpetuating the remembrance of great events.[e]

Songs on the battle-field.—A Western captain as he lay on the battle-field of Shiloh, suffered greatly from a fatal gunshot-wound through both thighs, and from thirst. He said, "The stars shone out clear and beautiful above the dark field; and I began to think of that great God who had given His Son to die a death of agony for me; and that He was up there—up above

B.C. 1316.

sidered as pronounced, not on the moral character of the woman, and on her deed, but on the public benefits wh. in the overruling Providence of God, would flow from it."—*Jamieson.*

c M. Henry.

d Paxton.

Jael salutes Barak

v. 23. *R. Warner, Old Ch. of Eng. Prin.* ii. 214.

L. H. Wiseman, M.A.

Why did the "Invincible Armada" perish, despite the beauty of its vessels, and the long-tried experience of its mariners? Probably the very fact that it called itself invincible had some share in its defeat. God allows us the epithet only after the fact.

"A woman's noblest station is retreat."—*Lord Lyttleton.*

a Paxton.

B.C. 1296.

the song of Deborah

praise to God

a "For the leading of the leaders in Israel, for the free self-offering of the people, praise Jehovah!"—*Stanley.*

b Lange.

c Ps. lxviii. 7—9; Ha. iii. 3—12.

d Prayer Bk. ver. of Ps. lxviii. 8.

e 1. *Bp. Hoadley, Bibl. Crit.* ii. 424—

B.C. 1296.

427; *J. Doughty, Analecta Sacra*, 198.

vv. 1, 2. *W. Rentoul, Ss* iii 350; *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* i. 319. *F. D. Maurice, Old Test* 328.

e M. Henry.

the exploits of Shamgar rehearsed, and the decline of Israel

a "The obscure, tortuous paths were the only means of communication."—*Stanley*,

b "There was no one to do justice in the gate."—*Syk. Comm.*

"There ceased to be heads in Israel."—*Stanley.*

v. 7. *Dr. J. Talbot, A Ser.*

v. 8. *Abp. Nicholson, A S r.*

v. 9. *Dr. C. Morgan, A Ser.*

"I knew a very wise man that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."—*Andrew Fletcher.*

c T. Adams.

"What is defeat? Nothing but education, nothing but the first step to something better."—*Wendell Phillips.*

d Harmer.

princes and others exhorted to praise God

a Ju. x. 4, xii. 14.

b "From amidst the shouting of

the scene of suffering, and above those glorious stars; and I felt that I was going home to meet Him, and praise Him there; and I felt that I ought to praise God, even wounded, and on the battle-field. I could not help singing that beautiful hymn, 'When I can read my title clear,' etc. And," said he, "there was a Christian brother in the brush near me. I could not see him; but I could hear him. He took up the strain; and beyond him another and another caught it up, all over the terrible battle-field of Shiloh. That night, the echo was resounding; and we made the field of battle ring with the hymns of praise to God."

6–9. (6) **Shamgar, Ju. iii. 31. highways,** *etc.*, vivid picture of unsettled times.[a] (7) **villages,** here, and *v.* 11, judges, rulers.[b] **a mother,** to the grown people she was as mother to a child. (8) **new gods,** other than Jehovah. **spear seen,** all the weapons of the people were taken away. (9) **heart is towards,** *i.e.* is full of admiration of.

The soldier's honour (*vv.* 8, 9).—I have chosen two strains of this song, from which, as they shall teach me, so I purpose to teach you, to bless the Lord that teacheth us all. The Lord give me a tongue to sing it, and you ears to hear it, and us all hearts to embrace it. Herein I observe—I. Great affliction. In the affliction I find three points of war: 1. The alarm: "they chose new gods." (1) "They chose," a frank choice, no compelling; (2) "Gods." And they a nation trained up in the knowledge of one God; (3) "New gods." Will any other nation change their gods? 2. The battle: "war in the gates." (1) "War," the nature of it; (2) "Then," the time of it: when "they chose new gods;" (3) "The gates," the place of it: this an extreme progress of war; 3. The forlorn hope: "was there a shield," etc. War in the gates, and yet no weapons! Two inferences from this part of the subject: (1) That war at some times is just and necessary; (2) That munitions and arms should at all times be in readiness. II. Great affection: "my heart is set," etc. Set upon—1. Men: "the governors of Israel;" 2. God: "Bless ye the Lord."[c]

Roads in the East.—There are roads in these countries, but it is very easy to turn out of them, and go to a place by winding about over the lands, when that is thought safer. Dr. Shaw takes notice of this circumstance in Barbary, where, he says, they found no hedges, or mounds, or enclosures, to retard or molest them. To this Deborah doubtless refers. The account Bishop Pococke gives of the manner in which that Arab, under whose care he had put himself, conducted him to Jerusalem, illustrates this with great liveliness, which his lordship tells us was by night, and not by the high road, but through the fields: "and I observed," says he, "that he avoided as much as he could going near any village or encampment, and sometimes stood still, as I thought, to hearken." And just in that manner people were obliged to travel in Judea, in the days of Shamgar and Jael.[d]

10–13. (10) **white asses,**[a] white dappled she asses, scarce and costly; so used by kings and nobles. **in judgment,** or on saddles, or horse cloths. "Ye that sit on rich carpets." **walk by the way,** the common people. (11) **places . . water,**[b] reference to the wells outside the towns: *villages*, as *v.* 7. **down to the gates,** coming from their hiding-places to dwell again

in the towns. (12) **awake,** exciting her spirit to further flights. **captivity captive,** pointing to the captive Canaanites. (13) **him that remaineth,** the remnant left of the persecution.

Blessings of peace.—Of these this passage gives us a vivid picture. I. Nobles whose equipages made them conspicuous for a prey. II. Judges whose administration of justice was suspended. III. Travellers whose mercantile pursuits had been hindered. IV. Shepherds whose well had been stopped, or the approaches cut off. V. Simple villagers whose life and property had been threatened were to rejoice with accord, while the prophetess and the hero led the song.

The ambush at the fountain.—Dr. Shaw mentions a beautiful rill in Barbary, which is received into a large basin, called *shrub we krub*, Drink and away, there being great danger of meeting there with rogues and assassins. If such places are proper for the lurking of murderers in times of peace, they must be proper for the lying in ambush in times of war: a circumstance that Deborah takes notice of in her song. But the writer who is placed first in that collection which is entitled *Gesta Dei per Francos*, gives a more perfect comment still on that passage: for, speaking of the want of water, which the Croisade army so severely felt at the siege of Jerusalem, he complains that besides their being forced to use water that stunk, and barley bread, their people were in continual danger from the Saracens, who, lying hid near all the fountains, and places of water, everywhere destroyed numbers of them, and carried off their cattle. To which may be added a story from William of Tyre, relating to Godfrey, Duke of Lorrain, afterward king of Jerusalem, who, stopping short of Antioch five or six miles, to which place he was returning, in order to take some refreshment in a pleasant grassy place near a fountain, was suddenly set upon by a number of horsemen of the enemy, who rushed out of a reedy fenny place near them, and attacked the duke and his people.[e]

14—18. (14) "Out of Ephraim came those whose root is in Mount Amalek,"[a] Ju. xii. 15. **Machir,** western Manasseh, Jos. xvii. 1—6. **the pen,** *lit.* staff of the ruler. Refer. is to officer who kept the muster roll. (15) **on foot,** contrast with chariots of enemy. **the divisions,** trans. "among the brooks of Reuben:"[b] watercourses descend. to the Jordan. (16) **bleatings of,** *lit.* pipings to the flocks.[c] (17) **Gilead,** name of district E. of Jordan. **breaches,** creeks, havens, harbours.[d] (18) **jeoparded,** exposed to peril.[e]

The divisions of Reuben (*vv.* 15, 16).—I. Explain the word "divisions." 1. Not dissensions in the tribe of Reuben; or 2. Separation from the rest of Israel: but 3. The watercourses that flowed through the territory of the tribe. What happened at these divisions. When the sound of war echoed through the land the children of Reuben *thought* of what they might gain or lose by the contest; and *searched* for plausible excuses for withholding aid. Our quiet resting-places are too often places for inglorious ease rather than nurseries of noble resolutions.

The breaches of Asher.—Though the coast of that part of Syria which is denominated Palestine is not remarkable for the number of its ports, yet besides Joppa, St. John d'Acre, Caipha under Mount Carmel, and a few others that might be named, there are some creeks, and small convenient places, where little

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the dividers of spoils, between the watering-troughs."—*Stanley.*

"No peace was ever won from fate by subterfuge or agreement; no peace is ever in store for any of us, but that which we shall win by victory over shame or sin; victory over the sin that oppresses, as well over that which corrupts."—*Ruskin.*

"It is the religion of Jesus alone that can give peace to man; it unites him with his Saviour; it subdues his passions, it controls his desires, it consoles him with the love of Christ; it gives him joy even in sorrow; and this is a joy that cannot be taken away."—*Fénelon.*

c *Harmer.*

the divisions of Reuben

a Spk. Comm.

b Gesenius.

c Nu. xxxii. 1—5; Ge. xlix. 4.

d Jos. xix. 29.

e O. Eng. *jupartie*, fr. Fr. *jeu partie*, an even game. Afterwards confounded with Fr. *jeu-perdu*, a lost game.

v. 15. *J. Stennett, Wks.* i. 310.

The wicked are repelled by any obstacles, however slight, in the way to heaven, but they make great efforts to gratify their lusts.

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f Harmer.

the stars and the river

a Josephus.
b Lange. Ps. xviii. 12—14.
v. 20. *Dr. J. Donne, Wks.* vi. 191.
v. 21. *C. Bullen, Ss.* 179.
v. 23. *N. Culverwell, Mt. Ebal, Light of Nature: E. Hickeringell, Wks.* i. 220.
v. 22 may read:—"'Then were the horse-hoofs broken by means of the prancings, the prancings of their strong steeds.' Anciently horses were not shod, nor are they at the present day in some parts of the East."—*Carpenter.*
"A great name of worldly glory is but like a peal rung on the bells; the common people are the clappers; the rope that moves them is popularity; if you once let go your hold and leave pulling, the clappers lie still and farewell honour."—*T. Adams.*
c Paxton.

the exploit of Jael

a Stanley
v. 24. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.; T. Arnold, Ss. on Interp.* 76
vv. 24—28. *Bp. Medley, Ss.* 296.
b C. Simeon, M.A.
v. 25. "The approaches of sin are like the conduct of Jael, it brings butter in a lordly dish. It bids high for the soul. But when it has fascinated and

vessels, and such as those that are used for fishing, may shelter themselves, and land what they take, though there are very few rivers on all that coast. To these places Deborah seems to refer, when she says, "Asher continued on the seashore, and abode in his breaches," or creeks, as it is translated in the margin.*f*

19—23. (19) **Taanach**, Jos. xii. 21. **waters**, *etc.*, either the Kishon flowing by Megiddo, or a mill-stream running into the Kishon. **gain of money**, either no ransoms received, or no booty taken. (20) **stars**, *etc.*, allusion to great storm,*a* or to peaceful shining of stars*b* on the victors, astrological reference to misfortune of Sisera. (21) **river**, a small stream, swelled suddenly in a storm. (22) Picture of chariot-horses without drivers, and entangled in bog; anciently horses were not shod. **Meroz**, not certainly identified.

The cursing of Meroz (*v.* 23).—I. The duty of universal union of the Church against a common foe is here clearly implied. Then heathenism, now popery, scepticism, or worldliness. II. The terrible consequences of neglecting this duty. The very site of Meroz not known. III. Some of the reasons that Meroz may have offered for this dereliction of duty. As, perhaps—1. Not consulted at other times, now sulky; 2. Too small to render essential aid. IV. This neutrality was evidently exceptional.

The ancient river Kishon.—The Kishon, whose furious current swept away the routed legions of Sisera, though mentioned in Scripture as a river, is only a small stream, except when swelled by the rain or melting snow. "That ancient river" pursues its course down the middle of the plain of Esdraelon, and then passing close by the side of Mount Carmel, falls into the sea at a place named Caipha. When Maundrell crossed this stream, on his way to Jerusalem, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but in passing along the side of the plain, he observed the tracts of many tributary rivulets falling down into it from the mountains, by which it must be greatly swelled in the rainy season. It was undoubtedly at the season when the Kishon, replenished by the streams of Lebanon, becomes a deep and impetuous torrent, that the bands of Sisera perished in its waters. The Kishon, like several other streams in Palestine, does not run with a full current into the sea, except in the time of the rains, but percolates through the sands which interpose between it and the Mediterranean.*c*

24—27. (24) **blessed**, in contrast with Meroz; she arrested one of the fugitives. (25) **butter**, curds, or curdled milk. (26) **smote off**, "smote his head, and beat and struck through the temple."*a* (27) **dead**, slaughtered.

Jael and Sisera.—Consider this transaction as—I. An historic fact. Recount the circumstances. Justify the act. II. An emblematic record—1. Of the judgments that await God's enemies; 2. Of the triumphs that are prepared for the Lord's people.*b*

Jael's lordly dish.—Though the bowls and dishes of the vulgar Arabs are of wood, those of their emirs are, not unfrequently, of copper, tinned very neatly: La Roque takes notice of this circumstance in more places than one. I have met with a like account, I think, in other travellers. May we not believe that the vessel which Jael made use of, to present buttermilk to Sisera,

and which Deborah in her hymn calls a lordly dish, or a dish of nobles, was of this sort? Her husband certainly was an Arab emir; the working of metals much more ancient than her time, Gen. iv. 22; and the mere size of the vessel hardly could be the thing intended. La Roque, indeed, tells us, that the fruits that were brought in at the collation that the grand emir of the Arabs whom he visited treated him with were placed in a large painted basin of wood: its being painted was, without doubt, a mark of honour set on this vessel of the grand emir, which distinguished it from the wooden bowls of the commonalty; but a painted wooden vessel would have been not so proper for buttermilk, as one of copper, tinned, which therefore most probably was the sort Jael used.[c]

28–31. (28) Shifting of subject to fears and hopes of Sisera's mother. lattice, openwork, for coolness, before window or round a balcony. (29) wise ladies, her maids of honour. answer to herself, thought it over in her own heart. (30) a prey, *etc.*,[a] mocking Sisera as himself the prey. (31) as the sun, Dan. xii. 3.

The song of Deborah and Barak (*v.* 31).—Notice—I. The two main distinctions of character which this text brings before us. 1. The heathen oppressors of God's people; 2. The lovers and friends of God. II. The portion assigned to each. 1. The doom of enemies; 2. The reward of friends.[b]

Treachery at Deborah.—There is an apparent treachery in the conduct of Jael to Sisera; and it appears from the following account as if the inhabitants of that country were still actuated by the same principle of interested dissimulation. "It was about noon when we reached the small village of Deborah, where we alighted to refresh, not suspecting that the treachery for which it is traditionally infamous, both in holy and profane records, was still to be found here at so distant a period. We entered into this village, and, like the unfortunate Sisera, demanded only a little water to drink, for with everything else our scrip was well provided. It was furnished to us, as we desired, with provender for our beasts, and the offer of all that the village possessed. While the animals were feeding, I was desirous of ascending to the summit of Mount Tabor, for the enjoyment of the extensive view which it commands. Our guide from the convent offering to accompany me, we took with us a man from the village, who promised to facilitate our ascent by directing us to the easiest paths; and taking our arms with us, while my servant and the muleteer remained below to take care of the beasts, we all three set out together; by forced exertions we reached the summit in about half an hour. In our descent from Mount Tabor we entered a grotto, in which there had formerly been a church, and had scarcely got within it before we heard the rushing of persons before the outer part of the passage by which we had entered. On turning round to ascertain the cause of this noise, we observed five or six armed men, three of whom we recognised to be those who had made such offers of their hospitality in the village of Deborah below.[c]

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lulled the victim, the nail and hammer are behind."—*Cecil.* "Sure the last end of the good man is peace! How calm his exit! Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground, nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."—*Blair.*

c Harmer.

conclusion of the song of Deborah

a "Trans. 'A dyed garment, and two parti-coloured cloths for the necks of the booty.' Either by *booty* meaning the captive damsels; the captive cattle; or the backs or shoulders of men or beasts laden with the booty."—*Spk. Comm.*

b W. B. Kerr.

v 31. *S. Heiron. Wks.* i. 441; *J. Stennett, Wks.* i. 213; *A. Alison. Ss.* i. 191; *J. H. Newman*, v. 173.

"Whether such sentiments would be appropriate in our own day is not in question: we believe in the doctrine and in the fact of progressive light."—*L. H. Wiseman, M.A.*

"It is time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss." — *Shakespeare.*

c Buckingham.

B.C. 1236.

oppression under Midian

a Ge. xxv. 2; Nu. xxxi. 1—18.

b "Caves with air holes like windows."—*Lange.*

"Catacombs, or galleries wh. they cut out of the rock."—*Stanley.*

c Ex. x. 4—6; Joel i., ii.

For Gideon's call see *Bp. Hall's Cont.* "Believe always your state and condition to be the work of God, and vary not therein, for a sparrow falleth not but by His providence, and your humiliation as well as your consolation is the glory of God, and the good of many others."—*Greenham.*

"A desire to resist oppression is implanted in the nature of man."—*Tacitus.*

"Defeat is a school in which truth always grows strong."—*Beecher.*

d *Burckhardt.*

Israel's cry and the prophet's warning

"Men think God is destroying them because He is tuning them. The violinist screws up the key till the tense cord sounds the concert-pitch; but it is not to break it, but to use it tunefully, that he stretches the string upon

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—6. (1) **Midian,**[a] nomadic people, occupying territory E. of Red Sea. Name applied sometimes to all Arab tribes. (2) **dens,**[b] *etc.*, country is threaded with caves, which make good hiding places. (3) **sown,** the year's harvest. This done year after year. (4) **against them,** among them with hostile intention. **Gaza,** the limit of their depredations, Ge. x. 19; Jos. x. 41. (5) **grasshoppers,** locusts.[c] **impoverished,** scarce able to secure grain enough for seed.

Note on the Judges.—I. The order of judges, the nature of their office; its distinction from either the office of Joshua, or that of the later kings. They were first deliverers of the people from some foreign yoke, and then civil rulers, centres of unity and authority in the different districts. II. The influence of particular judges was felt only in parts of the country. One after another different districts got into trouble, and the deliverer was generally found among the people in the sinning and suffering region. III. The character and conduct of the judges is not always to be commended. Some of them, as Samson, illus. the wildness and immorality of the age.

Eastern oppression.—In May the whole Hauran is covered with swarms of wanderers from the desert, who remain there till September. They come for a twofold purpose—water and pasturage for the summer, and a supply of corn for the winter. The oppressions of the government on one hand, and of these Bedouins on the other, have reduced the fellah (cultivator) to a state little better than that of the wandering Arabs. Few individuals die in the same village where they were born; families are continually moving from one place to another. In the first year of their new settlements the sheikh acts with moderation towards them; but his vexations being in a few years insupportable, they fly to some other place, where they have heard that their brethren are better treated, but they soon find that the same system prevails over the whole country. This continued wandering is one of the principal reasons why no village of the Hauran has either orchards, or fruit-trees, or gardens for the growth of vegetables. "Shall we sow for strangers?" was the answer of a fellah to whom I once spoke on the subject.[d]

7—10. (7) **cried,** iii. 9, 15. (8) **prophet,** to show the national sin wh. led to national calamity. (9) **their land,** ref. to Canaanites fr. whom delivered under Barak. (10) **gods of the Amorites,** prob. addressed to those living among the Amorites. Their idolatry was very foul.

A timely reminder.—I. Israel's cry. 1. To whom directed; 2. The reason. II. Jehovah's answer. God sends a messenger. 1. A prophet: He was not without a witness even then; 2. The message—(1) A reminder of past deliverances; (2) A reproof for present disobedience.

The uses of discipline.—Beethoven said of Rossini that he had in him the stuff to have made a good musician if he had only been well flogged when a boy; but that he had been spoiled by the facility with which he produced. When Mendelssohn was about to enter the orchestra at Birmingham, on the first performance of

his *Elijah*, he said laughingly to one of his friends and critics, "Stick your claws into me. Don't tell me what you like, but what you don't like." Washington lost far more battles than he gained, but he succeeded in the end. The Romans, in their most victorious campaigns, almost invariably began with defeats. Wellington's military genius was perfected by encounters with difficulties of apparently the most overwhelming character.[a]

11—14. (11) **an oak**, the well-known one. **Ophrah**, disting. from Oph. of Benj.[a] **Abi-ezrite**, Jos. xvii. 2. **threshed**, *etc.*, in an unusual and unsuitable place. **winepress**, either the place in wh. the pressing is done, or the vat into which the wine flows. (12) **mighty**, *etc.*, prophecy of what he would be. (13) **my lord**, simple term of respect. (14) **looked upon him**, phrase signif. to look graciously, giving strength by his look. **thy might**, with which he was now endowed.

Gideon's victory (*v.* 12).—Consider—I. The story connected with the text. II. Some of the lessons of instruction we may derive from it. 1. Not to depend upon our own strength in conflicting with the enemies of our salvation; 2. He who would serve God with acceptance must put away from him all idols; 3. God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another; 4. Do not doubt of success when God promises His aid.[b]

Historical characters.—The great and successful men of history are commonly made by the great occasions they fill. They are the men who had faith to meet such occasions, and therefore the occasions marked them, called them to come and be what the successes of their faith would make them. The boy is but a shepherd, but he hears from his panic-stricken countrymen of the giant champion of their enemies. A fire seizes him, and he goes down, with nothing but his sling and his heart of faith, to lay that champion in the dust. Next he is a great military leader; next the king of his country. As with David, so with Nehemiah; as with him, so with Paul; as with him, so with Luther. A Socrates, a Tully, a Cromwell, a Washington—all the great master-spirits, the founders and lawgivers of empires, and defenders of the rights of man—are made by the same law. These did not shrink despairingly within the compass of their poor abilities; but in their heart of faith they embraced each one his cause, and went forth, under the inspiring force of their call, to apprehend that for which they were apprehended.[c]

15—18. (15) **my lord**, orig. indic. that Gideon now perceived **his** speaker was more than a traveller. Comp. Moses[a] and Saul.[b] **poor**, *lit.* poorest, meanest. (16) **with thee**, assurance as given to Mos. and Josh. (17) **found grace**, Ge. vi. 8, xviii. 3, xix. 19. **sign**, to confirm the commission. (18) Eating would show his visitor was a man, yet only a man; it would also be sign of friendliness. **present**, lit. *minchа*, meat-offering.[c]

The call of Gideon.—I. The call and its attendant promise. A call to work; a great work, noble work, a dangerous work. The promise not of Divine aid only, but also of Divine presence. II. The signs, and their comforting assurances. Consumed sacrifice showed angel was really from God. God graciously in the others met Gideon's own wishes.

Eastern threshing-floors.—In Palestine, as in Greece and Italy, the floor was for the most part in the open air. Thus the

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the musical rack."—*Beecher.*

a Dr. Smiles.

Gideon

his call

a Jos. xviii. 23. "Close by the smooth level was a cave, into which the juice of the grapes ran off. . . . and which Gideon now used to hide the corn from the rapacious invaders. Above this cave, as it would seem, stood a rock, in the midst of a grove of trees, amongst which the most conspicuous was a well-known terebinth, spreading its wide branches alike over the rock and the winepress."—*Stanley.*

b T. Grantham. vv. 11, *Ss.* iii. 310; *Lady Howard, Gideon; F. Elwin. Ss. on Gideon; H. Watmuff. Gideon; R. W. Evans, Scrip. Biog.* ii. 55. *v.* 12. *T. Reeve, Ss.* 95. *c Dr. Bushnell. vv.* 12, 13. *T. Bradbury, Ss.* ii. 301. *vv.* 12—16. *Bousset, Ss.* xvii. 103. *v.* 14. *F. Russell, M.A., Ss.* 161.

he asks for a sign

a Ex. iii. 11.

b 1 Sa. ix. 21.

c "Its double sense of offering to God, or a gift to man, suits the doubt in Gideon's mind as to who his visitor might be."—*Spk. Comm.*

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threshing-floor of Gideon appears to have been an open uncovered space, upon which the dews of heaven fell without interruption. "I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry on all the earth besides, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by my hand as Thou hast said." But a barn, or covered space, had been unfit for such an experiment. The threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, seems also to have been an open area, else it had not been a proper place for erecting an altar, and offering sacrifice. In the prophecies of Hosea the idolaters of Israel are compared to the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor. Hence it was designedly prepared in a place to which the wind had free access on all sides; and from this exposed situation it derived its name in Hebrew. In Greece the same kind of situation was chosen; for Hesiod advises his farmer to thresh his corn in a place well exposed to the wind. From this statement it appears that a threshing-floor (rendered in our translation a void place) might well be formed near the gate of Samaria, which was built on the summit of a hill; and afforded a very convenient place for the kings of Israel and Judah giving audience to the prophets.[d]

19–24. (19) **ephah,** three measures, usual quantity for one baking.[a] **flesh,** cut into strips, and toasted. **broth,** for immediate use. (20) **this rock,** used as an altar. **pour out,** *etc.*, as a libation.[b] (21) **fire,** symbol of God, and mode in wh. He accepted offerings. (22) **alas!**[c] trembling and fear succeeds visions of God. See Moses, Josh., Job, Is., St. John, etc. (23) **the Lord,** not now the angel. (24) **Jehovah-shalom,** the Lord is peace. More of a monument than an altar.

The accepted sacrifice.—Concerning Gideon's, note—I. Of what it consisted. II. How it was offered and accepted. III. What the acceptance signified. The person of Gideon accepted. Peace and safety. Both these procured by Christ our Sacrifice for us. Well might Gideon call his memorial Jehovah-shalom.

The flesh in the basket.—There is a passage in Dr. Shaw that entirely unravels this matter, and affords a perfect comment on this text. It is in his preface: "Besides a bowl of milk, and a basket of figs, raisins, or dates, which upon our arrival were presented to us, to stay our appetites, the master of the tent where we lodged fetched us from his flock, according to the number of our company, a kid or a goat, a lamb or a sheep, half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served with cuscasoe; the rest was made kabab, *i.e.* cut into pieces and roasted, which we reserved for our breakfast or dinner next day." May we not imagine that Gideon, presenting some slight refreshment to the supposed prophet, according to the present Arab mode, desired him to stay till he could provide something more substantial for him; that he immediately killed a kid, seethed part of it, made kabab of another part of it, and when it was ready, brought the stewed meat in a pot, with unleavened cakes of bread which he had baked; and kabab in a basket for his carrying away with him, and serving him for some after repast in his journey? Nothing can be more conformable to the present Arab customs, or a more easy explanation of the text; nothing more convenient for the carriage of the reserved meat than a light basket; so Thevenot informs us he carried his ready-dressed meat with him in a

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v.15. *Bourdaloue, Ss.* (F. i.) 293.

vv. 15, 16. *T. E. Hankinson, Ss* 341; *J. Riddle, Bamp. Lect.* 252.

"The proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign one."—*Shenstone.*

"An extreme rigour is sure to arm everything against it."—*Burke.*

d Paxton.

Jehovah-shalom

a Ge. xix. 3.

b Ge. xxv. 14.

c "It was a belief prevalent in ancient times, that whoever saw an angel would forthwith die."—*Jamieson.*

v. 21. *J. S. M. Anderson, Cloud of Witnesses,* ii. 149.

"Jehovah-shalom," "The Lord, Peace," one of the beautiful, instructive, comforting names by which God has revealed Himself to man. Many have seen the picture of the martyr asleep. The jailer is coming to open the door, the crowd awaits the spectacle in the amphitheatre, the lions, fierce with hunger, are thirsting for blood, but the Christian sleeps, with a deep repose expressed in his features. He is

maund. What others may think of the passage I know not, but I never could, till I met with these remarks, account for his bringing the meat out to the angel in a basket. As for Gideon's leaving the supposed prophet under a tree, while he was busied in his house, instead of introducing him into some apartment of his habitation, and bringing the repast out to him there, we have seen something of it under the last observation. I would here add, that not only Arabs that live in tents, and their dependents, practise it still, but those also that live in houses, as did Gideon. Dr. Pococke frequently observed it among the Maronites, and was so struck with this conformity of theirs to ancient customs, that he could not forbear taking particular notice of it: laymen of quality and ecclesiastics, the patriarchs and bishops, as well as poor obscure priests, thus treating their guests.[d]

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at peace with God.

"Be just, and fear not; let all the ends thou aimest at be thy country's, thy God's, and truth's."—*Shakespeare.*

[d] *Harmer.*

25–27. (25) **the Lord said,** in vision. **even,** *and:* 2 bullocks seem intended. **throw down,** prob. labour of bullocks required for this work.[a] **grove,** tree or trunk of tree, covered with all manner of symbols, dedicated to Astarte.[b] (26) **this rock,** not as *v.* 20. Word means strong place, fortress. **ordered place,** lit. as marg. *in orderly manner.* (27) **father's household,** house of fathers, as Nu. i. 2.

Difficult duties of faithful men.—I. The duty was plain since the command was so explicit, and from God Himself. II. The execution was difficult. Opposition to be feared—1. From his father's household; either they were idolaters, or would be unwilling to spare the animal; 2. From the men of the city. III. It was resolutely performed in the way that, under the circumstances, was best. Learn to be as ingenious in devising plans for the execution of duty, as the godless are for evading it.

Excuse from duty.—When Palamedes came to Ithaca to invite Ulysses to join in the expedition against Troy, the latter, unwilling to engage in the undertaking, betook himself to ploughing the sand, and sowing salt, on the pretence of being visited with insanity. There are multitudes as insane as Ulysses, who betake themselves to works as insane, and all in the way of pretence to excuse themselves from the duties to which God calls them.

Gideon destroys the altar of Baal

[a] "Altars of Baal, as the superior Sun-god, were located on heights or elevated situations. They were built of stone, sometimes also of wood or earth, and were of considerable massiveness."—*Lange.*

[b] Ju iii. 7. r. 25. *Saurin, Hist. Disc.* iii. 347.

Men are valued, not by their usefulness on great occasions, but by the way in which they discharge the commonplace duties of life.

28–32. (28) **men of city,** prob. remnant of Canaanite population. **altar . . built,** close by, and with materials of idol altar. (29) **asked,** Gid. did not try to conceal his act. (30) **die,** as one committing sacrilege. (31) Emphasis lies on word *ye.* Baal, if a god, could take care of himself.[a] (32) **Jerubbaal,**[b] comp. *Jerub-bosheth,* 2 Sa. xi. 21, *bosheth,* a term of reproach for Baal.

Joash defending Gideon (*v.* 31).—The conduct of Joash leads us to remark—I. That if we have been zealous in a bad cause, we should with greater zeal seek to amend what we have done amiss, by our open advocacy of the truth. II. Nothing must prevail upon us to give up the innocent, whoever combine to destroy them. Though it may be highly dangerous to reprove a wicked people, we must do our duty, and trust God with the event.[c]

The impotency of idols.—When Pomare, king of Tahiti, gave up heathenism, he ordered a chief to chop his gods in pieces. The priests threatened Divine vengeance, but beginning with a trembling hand, and finding no evil result, he completed the

Gideon's name is changed

[a] 1 Ki. xviii. 27.

[b] "That is—'Will Baal contend with him, for he has thrown down his altar?' It sets forth the utter impotence of Baal, and the mockery which it excited."—*Lange.*

"Joash quieted the mob in a manner similar to that of the town-clerk of Ephesus. It was not for them to

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take the matter into their own hands. The one, however, made an appeal to the magistrate, the other to the idolatrous god himself."—*Chalmers.*

c G. Bush.

Gideon calls Israel to arms

a "The S. part of the Ghor lies in a very low level, so that there is a steep and difficult descent into Canaan by the southern wadies. Keeping this in view, we see the reason why the Mid. army, fr. E. of Jordan, entered Canaan by the northern wadies of the Ghor, opposite Jezreel."—*Jamieson.*

b Sir W. Scott's Lady of the Lake.

v. 34. *Saurin, Hist. Disc.* iii. 362.

Gideon's fleece

a "God's own character is well indicated in the sign of the fleece, cool in heat of all around, dry when all around are damped by fear."—*Ewald.*

b Ge. xviii. 32.

"Sailors have used every night to hang fleeces of wool on the sides of their ships towards the water, and they have crushed from water out of them in the morning."—*Spk. Comm.*

c C Simeon, M.A.

d Burder.

work heartily. After the last decisive battle, Pomare told the people to commit Cero (the god of war) to the flames. Instead of entering the temple, some bold spirits fired into it, saying, "Now, ye gods, if ye be gods, and have any power, come forth, and avenge these insults!" The gazing multitude were amazed, both at the rashness of the assailants and the impotence of the gods. At last the house was pulled down, shots were poured into the idols and they were burnt to ashes.

33—35. (33) **went over,** Jordan; their crossing place near *Bethshean,*[a] now Beisân. **Jezreel,** plain of Esdraelon, the great battle ground of Canaan. (34) **blew a trumpet,** the well-known war call. His own tribe responded heartily. (35) **messengers,** heralds. Comp. calling of Scotch clans.[b]

Preparing for war.—Gideon saw the coming struggle and—I. Himself sounded the war-cry. II. Sent messengers to arouse Israel. III. His call to arms recognised by the tribes. Note: Asher, rebuked for past supineness by Deborah, also responds.

Duty rewarded.—The late Duke of Wellington was very fond of field sports, and on one occasion a farmer's boy was ordered to keep a certain gate shut in order to prevent the many hunters who went that way from trampling down his master's crops. After he had been at the gate a short time, a gentleman came up and asked him to open it. "No," said the lad; "I was placed here to keep it shut." The gentleman became indignant and expostulated with the boy, remarking, "Don't you know who I am? I am the Duke of Wellington." The lad said he did not mind who he was, upon which the duke praised him for his firmness and gave him half-a-sovereign. Away ran the boy, skipping across the field, and shouting to every one whom he met, "Ah, I have done more than what Bony could do; I have stopped the Duke of Wellington!"

36—40. (36) **if thou wilt,** then graciously confirm thy purpose with a sign. Gid. did not ask in doubt, but for the confirming of his faith. (37) **fleece,**[a] prob. a whole one, wool would collect the dew. **floor,** threshing-floor. Smooth, circular space, in the open air. (38) **early,** to be sure no one had tampered with it. (39) **anger be hot,** asking another sign was, he feared, a trial of Div. patience.[b]

Gideon's fleece.—In these verses we see displayed—I. The weakness of man. Gideon could not give full credit to the work of God. II. The condescension of God. God accedes to his request. III. The efficacy of prayer. 1. Prayer prevailed here; 2. God will answer our prayers now.[c]

The dews of the East.—It may seem a little improbable to us who inhabit these northern climates, where the dews are inconsiderable, how Gideon's fleece, in one night, should contract such a quantity, that when he came to wring it, a bowl full of water was produced. Irwin, in his voyage up the Red Sea, when on the Arabian shores, says, "Difficult as we find it to keep ourselves cool in the daytime, it is no easy matter to defend our bodies from the damps of the night, when the wind is loaded with the heaviest dews that ever fell; we lie exposed to the whole weight of the dews, and the cloaks in which we wrap ourselves, are as wet in the morning as if they had been immersed in the sea."[d]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

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1—4. (1) **Harod,** *spring of trembling:* so named fr. fear of people. *v.* 3: mod. Ain Jalud, fountain of Jezreel.[a] **hill of Moreh,** prob. little Hermon, *Jebel-el-Duhy.*[b] (2) **too many,** bec. great impress. of Div. presence and blessing was to be made. **vaunt,** boast.[c] (3) **go to,** Ge. xi. 3. **fearful,** De. xx. 8. **mount Gilead,** prob. *Gilboa.*[d] (4) **water,** of the brook.

The Lord saveth not with sword and spear.—I. Gideon's army was not great at the first—1. When compared with the number and warlike character of the foe; 2. When compared with former armies of Israel. II. But too great for the accomplishment of the main purpose—1. The quickening of Israel's faith in God; 2. Giving a warning to Israel's enemies.

Lapping the water.—The Arabs lap their milk and pottage, but not their water. On the contrary, D'Arvieux tells us, that after they have eaten, they rise from table, and go and drink large draughts out of a pitcher, or, for want of that, out of a leathern bottle, which they hand to one another round and round. Few of the Israelites, if they did in common sup their milk and pottage out of their hands, as the Arabs do, would have been disposed to lap water in the same manner, if they drank too as the Arabs now drink. Two considerations more will complete the illustration of this part of the history of Gideon. The one is, that the Eastern people are not wont to drink standing. Busbequius, the imperial ambassador at Constantinople, in his celebrated letters concerning the Eastern people, affirms this in a very particular manner; the other, that the lapping with their hands is a very expeditious way of taking in liquids. "They are not restrained in their choice," says Dr. Russell. "When they take water with the palms of their hands, they naturally place themselves on their hams to be nearer the water; but when they drink from a pitcher, or gourd, fresh filled, they do not sit down on purpose to drink, but drink standing, and very often put the sleeve of their shirt over the mouth of the vessel, by way of strainer, lest small leeches might have been taken up with the water. It is for the same reason they often prefer taking water with the palm of the hand, to the lapping it from the surface. D'Arvieux, in that accurate account of the Arabs of Mount Carmel, expressly takes notice of this, observing that this may be the reason why spoons are so universally neglected among the Arabs, as a man would eat upon very unequal terms with a spoon, among those that use the palms of their hands instead of them. Until I met with this passage of Busbequius, I could not tell what to make of that particular circumstance of the history of the Jewish judge, that all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. It appeared to me rather the putting themselves into an attitude to lap water than anything else: as I supposed the words signified that they kneeled down by the side of some water in order to drink. But the matter is now clear: three hundred men, immediately upon their coming to the water, drank of it in the quickest manner they could, in order to be ready without delay to follow Gideon; the rest took up water in pitchers, or leathern bottles, or some kind of

Gideon's army

a 1 Sa. xxix. 1.

b Dict. Bib.

c Fr., *vanter;* Lat., *vanitare*, fr. *vanus*, vain.

d "Others think this may be the customary form of proclamation in Manasseh."—*Spk. Comm.*

"The Hottentots have a curious custom, resembling the dog and the three hundred chosen men of Gideon's army. On a journey, immediately on coming to water, they stoop, but no farther than what is sufficient to allow their right hand to reach the water, by which they throw it up so dexterously, that their hand seldom approaches nearer to their mouth than a foot; yet I never observed any of the water to fall down upon their breasts. They perform it almost as quickly as the dog, and satisfy their thirst in half the time taken by another man."—*African Light.*

"It matters not with what principle the newborn patriot is animated, if the measures he supports are beneficial to the community. The nation is interested in his conduct. His motives are his own. The pro-

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perties of a patriot are perishable in the individual; but there is a quick succession of subjects, and the breed is worth preserving."—*Junius.*

[c] *Harmer.*

Gideon's three hundred men

[a] "The wandering people in Asia, when on a journey or in haste they come to water, do not stoop down with deliberation on their knees, but only bend forward as much as is necess. to bring their hand in contact with the stream, and throw it up with rapidity, and at the same time such address that they do not drop a particle."—*Jamieson.*

[b] *Stanley.*

Comp. company at Thermopylæ and cavalry attack at Balaclava.

[c] 5. *A. Roberts, Vill. Ss.* iv. 179.

"Originality provokes originality."—*Goethe.*

the cake of barley bread

[a] Ge. xxii. 17; Ju. vi. 5; Is. xxiii. 19.

[b] "That the interpreter should hit upon the explanation given is not, therefore, very wonderful; and if the Midianites were accustomed, in their extemporaneous vessel, and bending down so as to sit jointly upon their heels and knees, or with their knees placed upright before them, either of which might be called bowing their knees to drink, though the last is the posture Busbequius refers to, they handed these drinking vessels with ceremony and slowness from one to another, as they were wont to do in common, which occasioned their dismission. So two-and-twenty thousand of those that were faint-hearted were first sent away; then all the rest, excepting three hundred men of peculiar alacrity and dispatch, the most proper for the business for which they were designed, but visibly unequal to the task of opposing the Midianites; and without some miraculous interposition of God, absolutely unequal."[c]

5—8. (5) **lappeth,** not putting mouth to water as a dog, but catching up some in hand, and lapping fr. it.[a] Character was thus shown; those lapping proved themselves *self-restrained.*[b] (6) **the people,** the remaining 10,000. (7) Gideon's faith must now be put to the test. (8) **took victuals,** took what they required for their enterprise fr. the people, before they left. This accounts for each of 300 having pitchers, lamps. and trumpets.

Gideon's army (*v.* 7).—Here were—I. Three hundred earnest men. The rest of the ten thousand drank at their ease. These stand, arms in hand, erect; not thinking unnecessarily about themselves, eager for the fray. II. Three hundred united men: one mind in those three hundred. Not merely external union, but union of heart and soul is required. III. Three hundred brave men. Only three hundred left, and yet none discouraged. IV. Three hundred believing men. So strong was their faith that, when the time came, they were willing to lay aside their weapons, and content themselves with the God-directed use of "lamps, pitchers, and trumpets." V. Three hundred selected men: selected that all Israel might learn that the battle is God's, and that all His enemies might know that opposition to Him is in vain. VI. Yet only three hundred.

Many called but few chosen.—Noah preached the coming flood to the old world for one hundred years, but only eight souls were saved thereby. To the cities of the plain Lot preached, but only three souls were chosen from them. Six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, passed through the Red Sea, but only two entered the promised land. Gideon went to fight the Midianites with thirty-two thousand men, but only three hundred were allowed to participate in the victory. These are types of the "many called, but few chosen."

9—14. (9) Command to begin, but delayed to afford Gid. another encouragement. (10) **down to,** important to observe relative position of the parties. (11) **armed men,** disting. fr. the camp followers: term used Ex. xiii. 18, Jos. i. 14, iv. 12, means under 5 officers, in 5 regiments, the custom of encampments. (12) **grasshoppers,** locusts. Obs. Eastern extravagance of expression.[a] (13) **barley bread,** the food of the poor and of beasts; expressing contempt for Israel. (14) This ans. shows a panic had already begun.

The Midianite soldier: the power of the little (*vv.* 13—15).—This dream ill. the power of the little—(1) By representing a great end reached by most insignificant instrumentality; (2)

By influence it had upon the mind of Gideon. The power of the little furnishes—I. An argument for special Providence. II. A lesson for our every-day life. 1. Despise not things of humble aspect; 2. Cultivate an appreciation of the little; 3. Recognise God's presence in the minute as well as the vast.[b]

Barley bread.—Barley bread is in some regions of Persia commonly used by the lower orders. It must not, however, be omitted, that in making bread, barley was used before any other sort of corn; for it is reported, says Artemidorus, that this was the first food which the gods imparted to mankind; and it was, according to Pliny, the most ancient sort of provision. But in more civilised ages, to use the words of the same author, barley bread came to be the food of beasts only; yet it was still used by the poorer sort, who were not able to furnish their tables with better provisions; and in the Roman camp, as Vegetius and Livy inform us, soldiers who had been guilty of any offence, were fed with barley, instead of bread corn. An example of this punishment is recorded in the history of the second Punic war. The cohorts that lost their standards, had an allowance of barley assigned by Marcellus. And Augustus Cæsar commonly punished the cohorts which gave way to the enemy by a decimation, and and allowing them no provision but barley. So mean and contemptible, in the estimation of the numerous and well-appointed armies of Midian, was Gideon, with his handful of undisciplined militia; but guided by the wisdom, and supported by the power of the living God, he inflicted a deserved and exemplary punishment on these proud oppressors. The meagre barley cake was put into the hand of Midian by the God of armies as a punishment for disobedience of orders, not to make a full end of his chosen people. "And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host."[c]

15—18. (15) **interpretation,** marg. the breaking thereof. **host of Israel,** the 300 prepared men. At once Gid. put his plan into action. (16) **three companies,** each to take diff. ways, and produce impression of surrounding the army. **lamps,** firebrands, torches, hiding their light at first within the pitchers. (17) **look on me,** prob. giving them an example of what he intended. The signal to be his blowing the trumpet. (18) **say,** shout. The shout of Israel always terrible.[a]

Interpretation of dreams (v. 15).—I. In many cases we have interpretation of heaven-sent dreams by Him who sent them. II. Here we have a dream interpreted, as, by the ungodly, dreams often are, by natural conscience quickening superstitious fear.

Israel's battle-cry (v. 18).—I. One part for Israel—"the sword of the Lord"—to keep alive the courageous zeal of the three hundred. II. The other part—"and of Gideon"—to strike increased terror into the heart of the foe, who already dreaded Gideon's name.

Battle-cries.—It was formerly the custom of almost every nation, when joining in battle, to begin the attack with loud

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songs, to call Gideon and his band, "cakes of barley bread," as their successors, these haughty Bedawin, often do to ridicule their enemies, the application would be all the more natural."—*Dr. Thomson.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"Superstition is the poetry of life. It is inherent in man's nature; and when we think it is wholly eradicated, it takes refuge in the strangest holes and corners, whence it peeps out all at once, as soon as it can with safety."—*Goethe.*

"When monarch reason sleeps, this mimic wakes."—*Dryden.*

"A certain degree of fear produces the same effects as rashness."—*Cardinal de Retz.*

c Paxton.

Gideon's night attack

a Nu. xxiii. 21. Three companies: to produce the impression of a large army, and make their enemy think he was entirely surrounded, so producing panic and disorder. Ancient warfare largely employed stratagem. See Saul's imitation (1 Sam. xi. 11).

v. 16. The trumpets had been taken from the regiments dismissed. Earthen jars or pitchers

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shouts, called cries of war, or of arms: these shouts were intended to terrify the enemy, to occupy the soldiers, and prevent them from hearing the shouts of their opponents. Froissart says that "At the battle of Crecy, fifteen thousand Genoese archers began to yell in a most frightful manner, to terrify the English." In these cries, every nation, and almost every leader, had their peculiar word or sentence, which also served as a kind of watch-word to distinguish friends from foes; cries of arms were likewise used to rally broken squadrons, especially when their banner was in danger. The ancient English cry was St. George; this was in such estimation, that a military writer, Davis, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, inserts the observance of it among the military laws, to the obedience of which he would have all soldiers sworn. "Item," says he, "that all soldiers entering into battle, assault, skirmish, or other actions of arms, shall have for their common cry and word, 'St. George! St. George! forward, or upon them, St. George!' whereby the soldier is much comforted, and the enemy dismayed, by calling to mind the ancient valour of England, which with that name had been so often victorious: therefore, he that shall maliciously omit it, shall be punished for his obstinacy."[b]

19—21. (19) **middle watch,** Jewish division of night into 3 watches of 4 hours each; so this about 11 o'clock, when sleep most profound.[a] (20) **three companies,** almost simultaneously. (21) **they stood,** the 300, every man proving himself brave and faithful. **ran,** to see what was the matter. **cried and fled,** vivid description of panic in large and mixed host.

The natural and supernatural (*v.* 20).—Notice—I. Some of the events in which we behold the co-operation of the natural and supernatural. 1. Providence: God works in Providence only what man cannot; 2. Conversion: all who would be saved must co-operate with the influence of the Divine Spirit; 3. The sustenance of the religious life; 4. The propagation of the Gospel. II. That the co-operation of the natural and supernatural is necessary to insure success. 1. This the only way success might be expected; 2. The only way in which success is possible; 3. A way that makes success certain. Learn—(1) Form a true estimate of yourselves; (2) Acknowledge the Lord in every success.[b]

The power of example.—No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples: even those who have an abhorrency or indisposition toward other studies are yet often much taken with historical narrations. And such are those which present to us the lives and examples of holy men, abounding with wonders of providence and grace: no attempts so gallant, no exploits so illustrious, as those which have been achieved by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage, of the ancient saints; they do far surpass the most famous achievements of pagan heroes. It was, I dare say, more wonderful that Abraham, with his retinue of household servants, should vanquish four potent and victorious kings; and that Gideon, with three hundred unarmed men, should discomfit a vastly numerous host; than that Alexander, with a well-appointed army of stout and expert soldiers, should overturn the Persian Empire.[c]

are largely used in the East for water, as well as skins. The lamps were torches or splinters of resinous wood, still used to give light in some countries. Firs dug out of the Irish bogs have been cut into laths, and made thus available. The battle-cry of the roundheads was, "The Lord of Hosts, the Lord of Hosts is with us," that of the cavaliers was, "The King and Constitution."

[b] *Percy Anec.*

lamps, pitchers, and trumpets

[a] "The sleepers and the dreamers slept on, to be waked up by the blast of the pastoral horns, and at the same moment the crash of the three hundred pitchers, and the blaze of the three hundred torches, and the shout of Israel, always terrible, which broke thro' the stillness of the midnight air from three opposite quarters at once."—*Stanley.*

v. 20. *J. E. Hanson, Ss.* 355

[b] *D. Lewis.*

[c] *J. Barrow.*

"Emulation admires and strives to imitate great actions; envy is only moved to malice."—*Balzac.*

22—25. (22) **against his fellow,** mistaking friend for foe.[a] **Beth-shittah,** house of the acacia, mod. *Shutta.*[b] **Zererath,** or *Zereda*, poss. *Zaretan* of Jos. iii. 16, not far fr. Beth-shan. **Abel-meholah,** field of the dance, 1 Ki. iv. 12, xix. 16. **Tabbath,** poss. lower down Jordan valley. (23) **pursued after,** those at first rejected were not far away, and might help to secure fruits of victory. (24) **waters,** both the streams of the district, and the northern fords of Jordan. **Beth-barah,** prob. *Bethabara.* (25) **Oreb,** the raven. **Zeeb,** the wolf.[c] **other side,** lit. *from beyond*, Ephraim had pursued the princes over Jordan to the E. side.

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the panic and defeat of Midian

a Comp. 1 Sa. xiv. 20; 2 Chr xx. 23.

b Porter.

c Is. x. 26. At one instant it appeared as if a mighty army had fallen upon them, and was a ready conqueror. The clashing of the broken pitchers sounded as if the enemy was already in the tents: the trumpets represented an immense army; and the flashing lights bewildered and frightened the host; sudden panic seized them, and they struck down each other.

It was a maxim of Napoleon I. that the skill of a consummate general is never so critically tested as in deciding how to turn a victory to the best advantage.

"A person with a bad name is already half hanged, saith the old proverb."—*Whipple.*

d Ed. Wilton, in *Good Words.*

Gideon's army and attack.—I. The select few. The bravest, most faithful men found out by a double test. Describe each. We always want to find the men best fitted for special enterprise. Best generals. Best Christian workers. II. The skilful stratagem. Effective because Midianite host made up of several tribes and nations, and a lot of non-fighting followers. Such an army would be liable to panic, and quite helpless in such a time. III. The utter discomfiture. Overwhelming, humiliating, complete. A glorious fulfilment of God's promise. Illus. how strong they are who trust in God and obey Him.

Arab names.—We find the meaning of these two names "Oreb" and "Zeeb," to be, the former "raven," and the latter "wolf,"—truly appropriate designations of Arab leaders. The custom of bestowing on individuals the names of certain animals, either from some supposed resemblance of character, or some remarkable circumstance in their history, has prevailed in different countries at all times. Canon Stanley tells us that the title "Leopard" is now given to the chief of the Arabs beyond the Jordan, who may be considered as the modern successors of Oreb and Zeeb. If we look into Roman history, we find yet more apposite examples in the ancient family of the Gracchi, called, it is said, from a word signifying "jackdaw;" and in another distinguished man, who, we are told, in consequence of the unexpected and effectual assistance of a crow, while engaged in deadly conflict with a gigantic Gaul, received the surname of "Corvinus." That it was not, however, a crow, but a raven, that espoused the cause of Valerius is evident; for Corvinus is derived from a word which means not crow but raven, and the adventure would be incredible if related of the crow, whereas it is perfectly in accordance with the ascertained habits of the raven.[d]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

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the expostulation of Ephraim

a "Their remonstrance is as characteristic of the growing pride of Eph., as Gid.'s answer is of the forbearance and calmness wh. places him at the summit of the heroes

1—3. (1) **Ephraim,** the leading tribe. **chide,** *see* Ex. xvii. 2. (2) **gleaming,**[a] *etc.*, a fig. way of acknowledg. that the greater honour belonged to them bec. they had taken the princes. In ancient warfare much depended on securing the persons of the princes or chieftains. (3) **God hath,** greatest honour due to Him. **anger,** Heb. *spirit.*

Gideon's answer to the men of Ephraim (*v.* 2).—Notice a few lessons suggested by the text. I. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." 1. War averted by Gideon's soft answer; 2. Apply the lesson to the Christian Church; 3. Apply also to the home life. II. It is better to destroy the principles of evil than to be con-

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of his age."–*Stanley.*

b A. F. Barfield. We all love to pluck the fairest fruit, and to gather the sweetest flowers; but put this down as a truth worthy to be graven on a pillar of brass,—that more enjoyable fruit grows by the wayside of the path of duty than in all the wilderness of wilful inclination.

c J. B. Brown, B.A.

Gideon pursues Zebah and Zalmunna.

a Ge. xxxiii. 17; Jos. xiii. 27; 1 Ki. vii. 46.

b Robinson.

c Kitto, etc.

d "A cruel torture, to wh. captives were often subjected in ancient times,—by having thorns and briers placed on their naked bodies, and pressed down by sledges, or heavy implements of husbandry being dragged over them."–*Jamieson.*

e Stanley.

v. 4. *Dr. S. Stennett, Wks.* i. 339; *W. Fenn, Ss.* 55; *Dr. R. Hawker, Wks.* ii. 123; *H. R. Roxby, Ss.* 351; *Dr. R. Gordon, Ss.* 256, and *Christ as Made Known.* ii. 393; *E. Blencowe, &c* i. 83.

f Anon.

As the fire-damp suddenly destroys those who appeared to be working in safety, so "sudden destruction" comes upon the sinner when he least expects it.

g Bunyan.

stantly fighting against results. III. Promptness in responding to the call of duty is the only way to ensure success. IV. Although late in the field, that is no reason why we should be discouraged. The gleanings may be better than the vintage.[b]

The happiness of duty.—To some duty, like law, seems a cheerless and rayless thing. The sun thinks not thus when he "rejoiceth as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, or a strong man to run a race." There is a sunny joy in the motion, the life, of all creatures, which, to the tuned and attentive ear, is music; which is but the hum of duty in the acting. The song of the creation is the hymn of duty. Every bird that sings, every bee that hums, every flower that lifts its tremulous voice of praise to Him who has made so good a world, every star, bears its part in the great flood of harmony which floats the tributes of the duty of creation before the eternal throne. For man, duty in the doing is glory in the winning: "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing" (the complete picture of duty), "seek glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life."[c]

4–9. (4) **passed over,** Mid. host had broken up, and fled in different directions. **the three hundred,** who had been up all night. Gid.'s special companions in his stratagem. (5) **Succoth,** place of tents or booths.[a] *Sukut*, on W. of Jordan;[b] more prob. town on E. of Jordan, in territory of Gad.[c] (6) adding taunt to their refusal. (7) **tear,**[d] *etc.*, thresh. The fierce answer of great provocation. (8) **up,** fr. Jordan valley. **Penuel,** Ge. xxxii. 24–30. (9) **tower,** of the Divine vision.[e]

Faint, yet pursuing (*v.* 4).—I. A case analogous to the Christian life. 1. A case, not only of warfare in general, but of pursuit against a conquered tyrant and enemy; 2. A warfare that aims at entire freedom; 3. A strife, according to human judgment, unequal and little likely to succeed; 4. Not conducted without means, yet entirely dependent upon Divine counsel and power. II. A condition often realised in Christian experience. Liability to faintness recognised in Scripture, arising—1. Not only from the labours, but the discouragements of the Christian life; 2. From the privations incident to a state of warfare; 3. From the influence of unbelieving fears. III. The duty incumbent under such circumstances: "pursuing." Consider—1. How great and good your cause; 2. What great encouragements you have; 3. What loss if you fail; 4. What reward awaits the victor.[f]

Tearing with thorns.—Thus did Gideon threaten the inhabitants of Succoth; and thus do masters, fathers, and schoolmasters swear they will punish those who have offended them. To see the force of the figure, it must be kept in mind that the people are almost in a state of nudity. To tear a man's naked body, therefore, with briers and thorns, would be no small punishment. See poor travellers sometimes, who, in consequence of a wild beast, or some other cause, have to rush into the thicket: before they can get out again, in consequence of thorns, they are literally covered with blood. There have been instances where a master, in his anger, has taken the jagged edge of the palmirah branch, to tear the naked body of his slave, and nothing can be more common than to threaten it shall be done to those who have given offence. People also often menace each other with the repetition of the old punishment of tying the naked body in a bundle of thorns, and rolling it on the ground.[g]

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10–12. (10) **Karkor,** beyond district of towns E. of Jordan, in the open wastes inhabited by nomad tribes. Not more than day's journey from Succoth. (11) **Nobah,** Nu. xxxii. 40, 42. **Jogbehah,** Nu. xxxii. 34, 35. Gid. seems to have made a circuit and come on them fr. behind. **secure,** considering itself beyond dispute. (12) **kings,** comp. Oreb and Zeeb, called princes, ch. vii. 25.

The secure host.—I. Picture the host retreating utterly discomfited, and rallying at Karkor. Imagined safety. So with enemies of God. 1 Th. v. 3; Pr. vi. 15. II. Gideon's forced march. By an unlooked-for quarter. Divine retribution comes in our secure moments, and by unthought-of channels. III. Another night surprise. Vain to say, "surely the darkness shall cover me." It was a great thing to cut off the two princes, who else might have devised another campaign.

Fancied security.—

> States that never knew
> A change but in their growth, which a long peace
> Hath brought unto perfection, are like steel,
> Which, being neglected, will consume itself
> With its own rust: so doth security
> Eat through the hearts of states, while they're sleeping
> And lull'd in her false quiet.[a]

Gideon attacks and takes Karkor

"A man in a trance saw himself locked up in a house of steel, through the walls of which, as through walls of glass, he could see his enemies assailing him with swords, spears, and bayonets; but his life was safe, for his fortress, was locked within. So is the Christian secure amid the assaults of the world."—*C. Evans.*

[a] *Nabb.*

13–17. (13) **before the sun,** lit. *fr. the heights of Heres,* an unusual word for the sun: it may refer to the mountain pass by wh. Gid. returned.[a] (14) **described,** wrote down the names. The number suggests a senate or council. (15) **came . . Succoth,** not returning by way of Penuel. (16) **thorns,** *etc., v.* 7. **taught,** should be *threshed.* (17) **tower,** as threat of *v.* 9. **men of city,** elders or princes.

Gideon chastising the men of Succoth and Penuel (*vv.* 15–17).—Consider—I. The punishment inflicted on them. 1. The provocation given was very great; 2. The punishment was just. II. The lessons it suggests to us. It is instructive to us in—1. A civil view; 2. A religious view. We should learn—(1) To prosecute the spiritual warfare under all discouragements ourselves; (2) To put no discouragement in the way of others.[b]

Tearing with thorns.—This punishment probably relates to a cruel method of torture used in those times for putting captives to death, by laying briers and thorns on their naked bodies, and then drawing over them some heavy implements of husbandry. Drusius thinks that persons put to death in this manner were laid naked on thorns and briers, and then trampled on.[c]

Gideon takes Succoth

[a] LXX.

v. 16. *Bp. Hall's Contemp.*

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Nothing is so pregnant as cruelty; so multifarious, so rapid, so everteeming a mother, is unknown to the animal kingdom; each of her experiments provokes another, and refines upon the last; though always progressive, yet always remote from the end."—*Lavater.*

[c] *Burder.*

18–21. (18) **childr. of king,** Oriental figure for beauty, strength, and grace of form. (19) **of my mother,** when there was more than one wife, this indic. the closest relationship. (20) **Jether,** as the heir, was the proper blood-avenger. **youth,** comp. 1 Sa. xvii. 33. (21) **rise thou,** esteeming it an honour to be slain by a warrior, a disgrace to fall by hands of a youth or a woman.[a] Death by a strong man would be swift and complete. **ornaments,**[b] *etc.,* according to custom of age.

Spiritual strength (*v.* 21).—I. There are great differences between men, not only of a physical or intellectual, but also of a moral and spiritual character. II. There are great differences between the same individual at different times. III. The in-

the end of Zebah and Zalmunna

[a] Ju. ix. 54.

[b] "Small ones of gold, in shape of half-moon or crescent, worn on necks of men, women, and camels. Custom of adorning necks of camels prevailed among Arabs so late as

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crease of spiritual strength is intensely desirable for individual comfort—for usefulness to others—for the glory of God. IV. It is essential to Christian prosperity to act upon the conviction that our strength is in God. V. The means by which spiritual strength may be increased. 1. Food: God's Word, Christ's flesh; 2. Air: communion with God in Christ; 3. Exercise: practice of Christian graces.

Children of a king.—Of a person who is beautiful or of a fair complexion, who is courageous and stately in his gait, it is said in the East, "He is like the son of a king." "He is as the son of Manmathon (Cupid)." "He is the son of a god."[c]

Gideon declines the kingship, and makes an ephod

22—27. (22) **rule thou,** in impulse of gratitude. Obs. beginning of desire for a king, and idea of hereditary sovereignty. (23) **the Lord,** Jehovah; first principle of the theocracy. (24) **earrings,** prob. should be *nose-rings.*[a] **Ishmeelites.** Ge. xxxvii. 28. (25) **they spread,** or Gid. spread his large military mantle. (26) **ornaments,** *see* note, *v.* 21. **collars,** these lit. eardrops. **purple,** the costly, royal colour. (27) **ephod,**[b] for use as a civil magistrate; no idolatrous intention. **whoring,** Ju. ii. 17. **snare,** cause of ruin.

Gratitude and piety.—I. The gratitude of the people—**1.** Evinced their desire for a monarchical form of government; **2.** Showed what kind of king they would prefer. II. The answer of Gideon—1. Illustrates the humility of his heart; 2. His desire that God might reign in the hearts of His people. (1) Had this wish of Gideon been fulfilled the nation had continued great; (2) The fulfilment of Israel's wish led to the ultimate ruin of the nation.

Rare self-denial.—The Emperor of Germany, Joseph II., having a vacant office, which he wished to confer on the son of Count de Palsy, intimated his intention to the father. The count thanked his Imperial Majesty for his kindness, but begged leave to observe that his son already possessed a considerable fortune, and had great expectations, and he thus had no occasion for an addition to his income. The count humbly suggested whether the place might not be more acceptably conferred on some father of a family, whose slender income would render it a desirable object. The emperor still pressed the office, when the count finally addressed his sovereign, saying, "Sire, I consent that my son should accept the appointment with which you design to honour him, but I implore your majesty to permit the salary annexed to it to be assigned to some person less fortunate in circumstances." The emperor, sensibly affected by such an instance of true greatness of mind, consented to the count's request: the place was given to his son, and the profits appropriated to the aged father of an impoverished family.[c]

28—31. (28) **lifted up,** *etc.*, after this most crushing blow. (29) **own house,** one he erected at Ophrah as the seat of his judgeship. (30) **body begotten,** indic. the royal state he assumed, and the low state of moral sentiment in that age. (31) **concubine,** not called wife, prob. bec. a Canaanite woman.

A great man's influence (*v.* 33).—I. The influence of Gideon for good was felt and acted upon while he lived. His living presence needful to animate it. II. When he died his influence died also. Christ's influence is still felt. The risen and ever-living

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time of Mahomet."—*Spk.Comm.*

"Oh, if so much of beauty doth reveal itself in every vein of life and nature, how beautiful must be the Source Itself, the Ever-Bright One!"—*Tegner.*

c Roberts.

a Ge. xxiv. 47; Job xlii. 11; Is. iii. 21; Ez. xvi. 12. marg.

b Ex. xxviii. 4—35; 1 Sa. ii. 18, xxii. 18; 2 Sa. vi. 14; 1 Chr. xv. 27.

vv. 22, 23. *J.S.M. Anderson, Cloud of Witnesses,* ii. 171.

v. 26. *J. Weemse, Expos.* i. 95.

"It would seem, fr. the hist., that he was not blamable in making this ephod, etc., as a civil robe or ornament merely, but that it *afterwards* bec. an object to wh. religious ideas were attached, whereby it proved a snare, and consequently an evil, by *perversion,* to Gideon and his house."—*Taylor's Fragment.*

c Percy Anec.

peace for forty years

"Numa Pompilius, from a love of peace, and to recommend it, altered the beginning of the Roman year. It formerly commenced with the

Saviour still makes His power felt. The world's great ones die not only out of sight but out of mind.—*Influence of the life.*—A holy life is the most effectual power for doing good: in this case the man himself seems, in a Scripture sense, to become an arrow. A poor invalid came home to an ungodly father's house to die; her meek submission, her patient endurance, her joyous hope, subdued his rebellion; and she expired, expecting to see him again. A modest tradesman upheld his family devotion, though it tried all the fibres of his courage; a clerk who lodged with him was won by the spectacle to begin a better life. A wife, on the way home from church, ridiculed the awkwardness of the preacher; looking up in her husband's face, she discovered his eyes were filled with tears; his emotion melted her heart. A peeress had a little class of ignorant women, whom she was wont to teach in the Scriptures. A blacksmith in the neighbourhood, a notorious villain, swore he would break up the school, and so one day violently forced his way in. She went faithfully forward in her work, and God touched his hidden sensibilities with the purity of her purpose and the indefatigableness of her zeal, and he became her efficient ally.[a]

32—35. (32) Gid. appears to have preserved his integrity to Jehovah up to the last. (33) **Baal-berith,** *covenant-lord.* The name under wh. Baal was worshipped by the Shechemites.[a] (34) **remembered not,** *i.e.* so as to be anxious about their allegiance to Him. (35) **kindness,** *etc.*, ingratitude toward God will be soon shown in neglect of God's servants.

The meaning of influence.—What is the proper meaning of influence? Originally, it certainly was used to denote some subtle mysterious agent flowing in upon some person or thing, something in the way that we conceive of an electric current, etc. Since, its meaning has been greatly extended; but still we do not extend it to every cause. As we should never speak of the influence of a stream carrying a man off, or of men who drag him to prison by physical force, so, neither, should we speak of a man's being "influenced" by the demonstrations of Euclid. But in moral concerns we do speak of his being influenced by arguments; though we should oftener speak—and should consider ourselves as speaking more strictly—of the influence of various passions. But we always use the word, I think, in those cases to which our ancestors confined it, viz., when we speak of one man having gained an influence over another of which no account can be given"; when he sways him independently of the amount of love, fear, respect, etc., felt, and beyond what can be referred to his reason, or to regard for his interest, or to any intelligible motive. I think there must be a certain mesmeric power possessed by some people in reference to some others. Some can thus influence one, or few; some, a great many; and some, none at all.[b]

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month of March (which Romulus had appointed because he loved Mars, the god of war), but Pompilius changed it to January, from Janus, the god of peace."—*Anon.*

a Hive.

"Planets govern not the soul nor guide the destinies of men, but trifles, lighter than straws, are levers in the building up of character."—*Tupper.*

Gideon dies and Israel declines

a Ju. ix. 4, 46.

vv. 34, 35. *Dr. R. South, Ss.* i. 450.

We are to find our first sphere of duty according to our moral nature, our age, and our circumstances. Thus, a child, nine or ten years old, is converted, and believes itself to be a Christian; it would be simply monstrous to say to that child, "Now you ought to go round and talk to people about the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Not one false man but does unaccountable mischief."—*Carlyle.*

b Abp. Whately.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

B.C. 1209.

Abimelech

he kills his brethren

1—6. (1) **the son,** ch. viii. 31. **Shechem,** Ge. xii. 6, chief city in Ephraim. **mother's brethren,** so Canaanites. His interest was bound up with them rather than with Gid.'s sons. (2) **men,** *lit.* masters. **all the sons,** insinuating the evils of

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divided authority. **reign,** neither Gid. nor his sons sought regal power. (3) indic. the way in wh. the plot was secretly spread.[a] (4) **pieces,** shd. be *shekels,* idolat. money. **house,** place of worship, poss. temple. **Baal-berith,** ch. viii. 33. **vain and light,** worthless vagabonds. (5) **one stone,** as act of sacrifice to Baal. (6) **Millo,**[b] a citadel or fortress of Shechem. **house of,** those who garrisoned it. **plain,** oak.

The spirit of a demagogue.—Abimelech strikingly illustrates the spirit of a demagogue. I. He was artful. He insinuated an untruth: that the nation would be ruled by many men with many minds. II. He was mercenary, quite willing to receive gifts from any source. III. He was cruel. Demagogues care little for their brethren. IV. He was ambitious. Got made king. Self-aggrandisement, at whatever cost, the demagogue's real aim. In our day nothing less than to write M.P. after their names will suit them.

The dissembler.—

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!
Dove-feather'd raven! wolfish-ravening lamb
Despised substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned saint, an honourable villain.

7—9. (7) **Gerizim,** Shechem is in valley under this **mount:** poss. the ancient city was on the hill.[a] (8) A parable, or cutting sarcastic allegory. **olive,** Ge. viii. 11. (9) **honour God,** bec. oil was used in the meat-offerings. **and man,** olive very useful tree. **go . . trees,** marg. *go up and down for other trees.*

Bramble rule; or, the people and their leaders (*vv.* 8—15).—The general truths contained in this fable are—I. That the people have a conscious want of leaders, and they are not particular in their choice of them. The want arises from—1. An instinctive faith that there is somewhere an unpossessed good for them; 2. A consciousness that they are incapable of reaching it themselves; 3. A conviction that there are members of their race superior to themselves. II. That inferior men are often more ready to assume the responsibility of leadership than great ones. III. That leadership in the hands of inferior men is ever fraught with mischief. 1. Small men can do great mischief; 2. The higher the office they reach, the greater is the mischief they can effect.[b]

Eastern allegories.—The people of the East are exceedingly addicted to apologues, and use them to convey instruction or reproof, which with them could scarcely be done so well in any other way. Has a man been told a secret, he says, in repeating it, for instance, "A tree told me this morning, that Kandan offered a large bribe to the Modeliar, to get Muttoo turned out of his situation." Does a man of low caste wish to unite his son in marriage to the daughter of one who is high, the latter will say, "Have you heard that the pumpkin wants to be married to the plaintain-tree?" Is a wife sterile, "The cocoa-nut-tree in Viraver's garden does not bear any fruit." Has a woman had children by improper intercourse, it is said of her husband's garden, "Ah, the palmirah-trees are now giving cocoa-nuts." Has a man given his daughter in marriage to another, who uses

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a Comp. 2 Sa. xx. 1; 1 Ki xii. 16.

b "It is evident that there was a distinct population dwelling in Millo, which tho' perhaps numerically small, had great weight fr. possessing the stronghold."—*Spk. Comm.*

See *Bp. Hall, Abimelech's Usurpation, Contemp.*

"Men are so simple, and yield so much to necessity, that he who will deceive will always find him who will lend himself to be deceived."—*Machiavelli.*

Jotham's parable

a "Several lofty precipices of Gerizim literally overhang the city, any one of which would answer his purpose."—*Land and Book.*

vv. 7—15. *C. Simeon, Wks.* iii. 47.

b *Dr. Thomas.*

"A brier is a brier, though it be in a paradise; and a lily is a lily, tho' it grow in a wilderness."—*Reynolds.*

The preaching of the Word in some places is like the planting of woods, where, though no profit is received for twenty years together, it comes afterward.

An old farmer's description of a pointless preacher was, "A good man likely, but he rakes with the teeth up."

her unkindly, he says, "I have planted the sugar-cane by the side of the *margossa* (bitter) tree."[c]

10—13. (10) **fig**, Ge. iii. 7. (11) **sweetness**, *etc.*, its fruit highly valued. (12) **vine**, Ge. ix. 20. (13) **cheereth God**, allusion to drink-offerings of wine.[a]

Pulpit brambles; or, a vacant Church making choice of a minister (*vv.* 8—15).—Introduction :—(1) It is a time of great responsibility to churches when making choice of a minister; (2) Churches sometimes show great want of shrewdness in their choice; (3) They ought to keep a view to the practical in giving a call; (4) Very often we find the most insignificant ministers the most ready to accept invitations from large churches; (5) A stated ministry is advantageous to churches; (6) Great evils follow the choice of unsuitable ministers; (7) Churches will never reach their true position while their pulpits are filled with brambles. Consider—I. That the ministerial life is one of great sacrifice: "should I leave my fatness?" II. That most frequently the ministerial brambles are blessed with unanimous calls (*v.* 14). III. That the men of small talent, almost without exception, are full of vanity. IV. That the great force of the bramble pulpit is in destruction. V. That some of our large churches have frequently been deservedly punished when they have lost their old minister.[b]

The power and use of satire.—

Oh, sacred weapon, left for truth's defence,
Sole dread of folly, vice, and insolence,
To all but heaven-directed hands denied;
The muse may give thee, but the gods must guide.
Rev'rent I touch thee, but with honest zeal,
To rouse the watchmen of the public weal;
To virtue's work promote the tardy hall,
And goad the prelate, slumbering in his stall.[c]

14, 15. (14) **bramble**, *Athad*, as Ps. lviii. 9; either prickly-pear;[a] or the *Lycium Europæum*, wh. is common in hedges;[b] or the *Rhamnus Paliurus*, of Linnæus, the *Zizyphus spina Christi*.[c] (15) **in truth**, sincerely. Obs. satire in finding shadow under a bramble bush. **fire**, *etc.*, the burning of only a bramble might set fire to lofty trees.

Jotham on Gerizim.—"The ancient city of Shechem, I suppose, stood where Nablûs does now, and it is easy to comprehend how Jotham could stand above it, and deliver his cutting allegory in the hearing of the people, and then 'run away' before they could take him. Several lofty precipices of Gerizim literally overhang the city, any one of which would answer his purpose. Nor would it be difficult to be heard, as everybody knows who has listened to the *public crier* of villages on Lebanon. In the stillness of evening, after the people have returned home from their distant fields, he ascends the mountain side above the place, or to the roof of some prominent house, and there 'lifts up his voice and cries' as Jotham did; and he gives forth his proclamation with such distinctness that all can hear and understand it. Indeed, the people in these mountain countries are able from long practice so to pitch their voices as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across enormous wadies, and give the most minute directions, which are perfectly understood; and in doing this they seem to speak very

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c Roberts.

a Le. xxiii. 13.

b Mortals.

"Of satires I think as Epictetus did: "If evil be said of thee, and if it be true, correct thyself; if it be a lie, laugh at it.' By dint of time and experience I have learned to be a good post-horse; I go through my appointed daily stage, and I care not for the curs who bark at me along the road."—*Frederick the Great.*

"A satire should expose nothing but what is corrigible, and should make a due discrimination between those that are and those that are not the proper objects of it."—*Addison*

c Pope.

a Dr. Bonar.

b Dr. Thomson.

c Kitto.

"My country claims me all, claims every passion; her liberty henceforth be all my thought! though with a brother's life yet cheaply bought; for her my own I'd willingly resign, and say, with transport, that the gain was mine."—*Martyn.*

"A little wit and a great deal of ill-nature will furnish a man for satire; but the greatest instance of wit is to commend well."—*Tillotson.*

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d *Dr. Thomson. Land and Book*, p. 473.

e "The *Beer* of Nu. xxi. 16, on the frontier of Moab."—*Ewald.*

rr. 19, 20. *Bp. Sheridan, Ss.* i. 355.

"Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders generally discover everybody's face but their own;—which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it."—*Swift.*

"The noblest motive is the public good."—*Virgil.*

b *Bp. Porteus.*

the insurrection of Shechem

a 1 Sa. xvi. 14—23.

b "Friendship among the wicked is only a league of vice against others. In itself it cannot stand."—*Lange.* "Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which, after the first and second blow, may be drawn out with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head, the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood."—*St. Augustine.*

little louder than their usual tone of conversation. Jotham, therefore, might easily be heard by the greater part of the inhabitants of Shechem. The costume of his allegory is simple and natural, and the allusions are to the very trees which most abound at Nablûs—the olive, the fig, the vine, and the bramble."*d*

16—21. (16) Endeavour to win repentance for the wrong done: appeal to conscience. **deserving,** suggests ingratitude of their conduct. (17) **adventured,** put his life in peril. (18) **maid servant,** concubine, in ch. viii. 31. **your brother,** the mother being Shechemite. (19) **rejoice ye,** be glad in, enjoy your king. (20) **fire,** *etc.*, may Abim. be occasion of ruin to you, and you to him. (21) **Beer,**[e] now *El Bireh*, 10 miles N. of *Jerus.*

A patriotic satirist.—I. Some of the uses of satire, with illustrations from Word of God. II. This of Jotham in particular. 1. He suggests that they may have acted up to their light in electing Abimelech; 2. He hints that perhaps Gideon did not deserve more from them; 3. Was not Abimelech nobly born? 4. He exhorts king and people to rejoice in each other as worthy of each other; 5. If these things were not right—Jotham knew they were not—he prays that king and people may destroy each other.

The patriot.—He who undertakes an occupation of great toil and great danger, for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting his country, is a most valuable and respectable member of society; and if he conducts himself with valour, fidelity, and humanity, and amidst the horrors of war cultivates the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout and holy life, he most amply deserves, and will assuredly receive the esteem, the admiration, and the applause of his grateful country; and, what is of still greater importance, the approbation of his God.[b]

22—25. (22) **over Israel,** apparently the other tribes submitted to him. The word used for reigned indic. its tyrannical, despotic character. (23) **evil spirit,**[a] dissension was God's judgment on their sin. **treacherously,** usurped authority is of necessity unstable.[b] (24) **laid upon,** as guilt to be punished. (25) **liers in wait,** spies. **for him,** prob. robbing and waylaying travellers, and pretending to have the authority of Abim., so turning people against him.

No friendship among the wicked.—I. Who are these with this feud? The men whom the king had paid: the king whom they had elected. Friendship based on convenience, not affection. II. How came this feud about? It was provoked by the righteous anger of God. III. Why did God act thus? To avenge the murder of the sons of Gideon. Learn—1. Prosperity of the wicked is shortlived; 2. Ill-gotten gains and titles do not prosper.

Selfish friendship.—A number of mirrors are set around a little child. He looks into them all in turn, and admires each. What then? does he think the mirrors beautiful? No: he sees and admires only himself, although, in his childishness, he is not aware that the beauty which draws him is all his own. Alas! we often use our friends only as looking-glasses to see ourselves in. We imagine that we are loving them because we look towards

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them while we love: but it is the reflection of our own interests all the time that leads us captive.[c]

c Dr. Arnot.

Gaal heads the insurrection

26—29. (26) **Gaal**, prob. Canaanitish adventurer. (27) **made merry**, ref. to the thank-offerings for the new vintage.[a] (28) **Shechem**, son of, an assumed name of Abim. **Jerubbaal**, Baal's enemy, in whose house they were feasting. **serve**, *i.e.* let us serve the descendants of our ancestor Hamor.[b] (29) **would to God**, Gaal wishes he were prefect of the city, as Zebul was. **increase**, *etc.*, an apostrophe addressed to the company.

a Spk. Comm.

Diamond cut diamond.—I. That strifes, jealousies, divisions in high quarters furnish opportunities to the enemies of government. II. That a wicked, ill-governed people are likely to be deceived in their choice of an insurrectionary leader. Gaal himself a vain, boastful person.

b Lange. Ge. xxxiv. 1, 4.

Vintage in the East.—In the East they still tread their grapes after the ancient manner. "August 20, 1765, the vintage (near Smyrna) was now begun, the juice (of the grapes) was expressed for wine; a man, with his feet and legs bare, was treading the fruit in a kind of cistern, with a hole or vent near the bottom, and a vessel beneath to receive the liquor."[c]

The wicked are usually most secure when they are most in danger.

"Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war."—*Milton.*

c Chandler.

Zebul prepares a snare for Gaal

30—33. (30) **kindled**, hot. (31) **privily**, craftily. or the word shd. be treated as a proper name, *to Tormah*.[a] The plot of Gaal's party was to secure the city: this they appear to have accomplished. (32) **by night**, hurriedly. and secretly, so taking them at unawares. **in the field**, outside the city. (33) **find occasion**, Zebul intended to render efficient aid fr. within.

a Marg.

The counter-plot.—We are reminded—I. That the policy of the wicked is ofttimes one of craft. II. That government by ungodly men leads to disorder. Like prince like people. A lawless ruler can hardly enforce law. III. That governments founded upon crime cannot be upheld but by craft and violence.

"Opportunity has hair in front; behind she is bald: if you seize her by the forelock, you may hold her; but, if suffered to escape, not Jupiter himself can catch her again."—*From the Latin.*

As thou shalt find occasion.—The Hebrew has, "As thy hand shall find." (1 Sa. x. 7, margin.) In asking a favour, it is common to say, "You must not deny me, sir; but as your hand finds opportunity, so you must assist me." "Well, my friend, when I have the opportunity of the hand, I will assist you." "The man has assisted me according to the opportunity of his hand; what can he do more?"[b]

b Roberts.

Abimelech prepares an ambush

34—38. (34) **laid wait**, accord. to Zebul's advice. **four companies**, or parties, for quieter movements, and better eluding observation. (35) **stood . . city**, prob. as assuming rule and magistracy. (36) **to Zebul**, who still made show of siding with him. **shadow**, *etc.*,[a] by this ans. gaining time, and putting Gaal off his guard. It indic. some contempt for Gaal. (37) **middle**, marg. navel. **plain of Meonenim**, oak of the soothsayers. (38) **despised**, *v.* 28.

a "By 'tops of mountains' we are to understand the more distant mountains; by the 'height of the land' a nearer hill in the immediate vicinity of the city: by the *Elon Meonenim* (magician's grove), a dusky forest against the near horizon."—*Lange.*

Where is boasting then?—I. Gaal had vauntingly challenged Abimelech to increase his army and come out. Men in the pride of their strength and influence apt to be boastful. II. Boastful spirits sometimes find that Providence gives them an opportunity for proving their courage. III. Boasters often find some Zebul at hand to remind them of their boasts, and hound them on to destruction.

The shadows of the mountains.—Our translation of the Book of Judges, from the Hebrew, represents Zebul as saying to Gaal,

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upon his being alarmed at seeing troops of men making to him, Thou seest the shadows of the mountains as if they were men; whereas Josephus represents him as telling him he mistook the rocks for men. A commentator might be at a loss to account for this change, that had not read Doubdan's representation of some part of the Holy Land, in which he tells us, that in those places there are many detached rocks scattered up and down, some growing out of the ground, and others are fragments, broken off from rocky precipices, the shadow of which, it appears, Josephus thought might be most naturally imagined to look like troops of men at a distance, rather than the shadow of the mountains.[b]

"Normal sights alone, but rural sounds, exhilarate the spirit and restore the tone of languid nature."—*Cowper.*

[b] *Dr. Shaw.*

Gaal is defeated

39—42. (39) **men of Shechem,** as *v.* 26. (40) **chased him,** defeating Gaal in the open; he, however, gained the gate, and closed it. (41) **Arumah,** near Shechem, poss. *Rumah* of 2 Ki. xxiii. 36. **thrust out,** *etc.*, this he could do bec. public feeling turned against the defeated boaster; it did not turn to Abim. (42) **morrow,** not after the defeat, but after Gaal was thrust out. **field,** going unsuspectingly to their work.

"The instability of friendship furnishes one of the most melancholy reflections suggested by the contemplation of human life; and few of us have travelled far upon our pilgrimage, without having had occasion to lament the loss of some companion who has parted from our side upon the first rumour that we have wandered from the fountains of the desert." — *Willmott.*

Caught in the toils.—I. The shadows were men after all. The forecasting fears of Gaal were realised. II. The men who followed Gaal were, like shadows, dispersed. Retreating upon Shechem, Gaal found the city in possession of Zebul. Learn—(1) The hollowness of vain boasting; (2) The folly of false confidences; (3) The prosperity of fools destroys them.

The fickleness of friendship.—What is sweeter than a well-tuned lute, and what more delightful than a friend—one who can cheer us in sorrow, with his wise and affectionate discourse! Nothing, however, is sooner untuned than a lute; and nothing is more fickle than human friendship. The tone of the one changes with the weather, that of the other with fortune. With a clear sky, a bright sun, and a gentle breeze, you will have friends in plenty; but let fortune frown, and the firmament be overcast, and then your friends will prove like the strings of the lute, of which you will tighten ten before you find one that will bear the stretch and keep the pitch.[a]

[a] *Gotthold.*

the destruction of Shechem

43—45. (43) **the people,** his own people. **laid wait,** hiding from view until the men were well away from the city. **smote them,** as more precisely described next *v.* (44) **stood . . city,** preventing both return of the citizens, and shutting of the gates. (45) **all that day,** people left in city making a vigorous resistance. **sowed it with salt,** as symbolical act, devoting it to uselessness and barrenness as having broken covenant.[a]

Lange.

Sin has entwined its fibrous roots into every part of our natural being, so that a complete dissolution of all its parts is required to weed them out finally and completely.

Sowing salt.—Salt in small quantities renders land extremely fertile; but too much of it destroys vegetation. "Every place," says Pliny, "on which salt is found is barren, and produces nothing." Hence the sowing of a place with salt was a custom in different nations to express permanent desolation. Sigonius observes that when Milan was taken, A.D. 1162, the walls were razed, and it was sown with salt. And Brantome informs us that it was an ancient custom in France to sow the house of a man with salt who had been declared a traitor to his king. Charles IX., king of France, the most base and perfidious of human beings, caused the house of Admiral Coligni (whom he and the Duke of Guise caused to be murdered, with thousands more of Protestants, on the eve of St. Bartholomew, 1572) to be sown with salt.[b]

[b] *Bagster's Bible.*

"God is the brave man's hope and not the coward's excuse."—*Plutarch.*

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46–49. (46) **tower of Shechem,** see *v.* 6. **hold,** a hall in the idol temple. They thought it safe as a sanctuary. (47) **gathered,** in this one place. (48) **Zalmon,**[a] not certainly known; may be Ebal.[b] **make haste,** with idea of earnestness rather than hurry. (49) **to the hold,** the entrance would be of wood, and poss. the whole building. Obs. lit. fulfil. of Jotham's curse.[c]

Cruelty and selfishness.—At the time of the destruction of the man-of-war, *Prince George*, by fire, off Lisbon, by which four hundred and eighty-five persons perished, the fishermen and merchantmen, of which there were many around the burning ship, instead of rescuing their drowning fellow-creatures, busied themselves in picking up fowls, and whatever else floated to them from the wreck, except the drowning sailors.

the burning of the tower of Shechem

a Ps. lxviii. 14.

b *Stanley.*

c Ju. ix. 20.

"Self-will is so ardent and active, that it will break a world to pieces to make a stool to sit on."—*Cecil.*

"Thou, who lov'st nothing but what nothing loves, and that's thyself!"—*Dryden.*

50–53. (50) **Thebez,** now Tûbas.[a] The inhab. seem to have joined in opposing Abim. (51) **top of the tower,** fr. wh. in those days they fought by throwing stones down, shooting arrows, etc.[b] (52) **went hard,** pressing close, so as to set fire to the entrance. **burn,** repeating former plan. (53) **millstone,** part of ordinary household handmill. **all to,** an old Eng. term, meaning *quite, entirely.*

The end of Abimelech.—From it we learn—I. That the death of the wicked often reflects the character of their life. This a violent one, like the life it ended. II. That a false life sometimes ends with a lie. III. That the ruling passion of the ungodly is sometimes strong in death. Abimelech vainglorious to the last.

Stones as implements of war.—April 9th, we all were called up, and acquainted that the walls were assaulted and scaled in five different places, though it was so exceedingly dark that neither moon nor stars were to be seen; yet the agent and all the gentlemen of the factory (excepting a young gentleman, who was so obliging as to stay for me), rose immediately, and made the best of their way for the creek's mouth. In our way the women threw tiles and stones at us from the tops of the houses, though we called to them in Arabic to forbear, as we were English: they answered, we lied, for that we were Agema (Persians) in English dress. But as it was so very dark that we could not see each other at four yards' distance, we were obliged to run the gauntlet, and were so lucky as to escape without being knocked on the head, although we received many blows on the arms and shoulders which left their marks for some days.[c]

the death of Abimelech

a 2 Sa. xi. 21.

b "The Assyrian bas-reliefs afford counterparts of the scene here described so vividly and exact, we might almost suppose them to be representations of the same historic events."—*Jamieson.*

v. 53. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iii. 400.

c *Parson's Trav. in Asia.*

"It is not our criminal actions that require courage to confess, but those which are ridiculous and foolish."—*Rousseau.*

54–57. (54) **armour-bearer,** such attended on ancient chieftains.[a] **a woman,** wh., to a warrior, would be the utmost disgrace. (55) **departed,** having no other bond of union than devotion to Abim. (56) **rendered,** back; brought the consequences of his wickedness on his own head. (57) **curse,** as *v.* 20.

Retribution.—We learn—I. That no craft or courage can evade the just judgment of God. II. That, in the providence of God, the sin of society recoils upon its own head.

Retribution inevitable.—When Bonaparte was about to invade Russia, a person who had endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, finding he could not prevail, quoted to him the proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes;" to which he indignantly replied, "I dispose as well as propose." A Christian lady, on hearing the impious boast, remarked, "I set that down as the turning-

retribution

a 1 Sa. xiv. 7, xvi. 21, xxxi. 6.

"After long experience of the world, I affirm, before God, I never knew a rogue who was not unhappy."—*Junius.*

"Much danger makes great hearts most resolute."—*Marston.*

point of Bonaparte's fortunes. God will not suffer a creature, with impunity, thus to usurp His prerogative. It happened to Bonaparte just as the lady predicted. His invasion of Russia was the commencement of his fall.

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Tola and Jair

a Jos. xiii. 3; 1 Chr. ii. 22.

See *Bp. Hall's Contemp. Jephthah*; *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iii. 413.

b Dr. Parker.

Unselfish and noble acts are the most radiant epochs in the biography of souls. When wrought in earliest youth, they lie in the memory of age like the coral islands, green and sunny, amidst the melancholy waste of ocean."—*Dr. Thomas.*

"He who, in questions of right, virtue, or duty, sets himself above all ridicule, is truly great, and shall laugh in the end with truer mirth than ever he was laughed at."—*Lavater.*

c Paxton.

"Men are taught virtue and a love of independence by living in the country."—*Menander.*

oppression under Philistia and Ammon

a Comp. 1 Ki. xi. 5, 7, 33.

A Scotch woman, whose husband went to sea a few days after

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—5. (1) **defend,** better as marg. *deliver.* **Puah,** Ge. xlvi. 13; 1 Chr. vii. 1. **Dodo,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 9, 24. **Shamir,** not the town in hill country of Judah, mentioned in Jos. xv. 48. (2) **judged,** no special act of deliv. fr. outside enemies was effected by him. (3) **Jair,** poss. descendant of the Jair of Nu. xxxii. 41; De. iii. 14.[a] (4) **ass-colts,** the animal ridden by princes. **cities,** villages. **Havoth-jair,** *villages of Jair.* Nu. xxxii. 41. (5) **Camon,** *full of stalks or grain,* prob. in Gilead: not identified.

Historical negatives.—I. Great deeds do not always go with great names. II. It does not always follow that because deeds are not great, therefore they are not useful. III. Human history when looked at in great breadths is seen to have a plan and to be under the most beneficent control. IV. Do not shrink from duty because you are invited to follow an illustrious predecessor. V. Greatness will be abused if it be taken as a discouragement of humble service. From the Cross we learn—1. That the greatest name is servant; 2. That the humblest deed will be rewarded; 3. That submission must precede exaltation; 4. That self-denial is necessary to the growth of the best life.[b]

Riding on asses.—To ride upon an ass was, in the days of the Judges, a mark of distinction, to which it is probable the vulgar might not presume to aspire. This is evident from the brief notices which the inspired historian gives of the greatness and richness of Jair, the Gileadite, one of these judges: "he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass-colts; and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day." Abdon the Pirathonite, another of these judges, "had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass-colts." It is reasonable to suppose, that the manners and customs of the chosen tribes underwent a change when the government became monarchical, and the fascinating pleasures of a court began to exert their usual influence; still, however, the ass kept his place in the service of the great. Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, rode on an ass; as did Ahithophel, the prime minister of David, and the greatest statesman of that age. Even so late as the reign of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, the services of this animal were required by the wealthy Israelite: the Shunamite, a person of high rank, saddled her ass, and rode to Carmel, the residence of Elisha, to announce the death of her son to the prophet, and to solicit his assistance.[c]

6—9. (6) **Baalim,** Nu. xxii. 41. **Ashtaroth,** pl. form of *Ashtoreth,* the female deity of the Phœnicians. This descrip.[a] indic. very general lapse into idolatry throughout the land. (7) **sold them,** ch. ii. 14. **Philistines,** *see* ch. iii. 31. Since Shamgar's time they had grown in strength. **Ammon,** prob. leagued with the Phil. and oppressing tribes E. of Jordan. (8) **that year,** the last of the oppression: the attack narrated *v.* 9

aroused Is. to repentance. (9) **Judah,** *etc.*, tribes on the W. of Jordan.

The sore distress of Israel.—I. It was self-invoked. II. Occasioned by departure from the worship and service of God. III. Proved the weakness of the gods they preferred to Jehovah. IV. Alliance with the world's sin did not secure the world's friendship.

Tyrannical oppression.—The Hebrew has, "crushed." Of a severe master it is said, "He crushes his servants." "Ah! my lord, crush me not." "When will the king cease to crush his people?"[b]

10—14. (10) **forsaken . . Baalim,** obs. they confess both negative and positive transgression. (11) **the Lord said,** prob. through the high priest. **Egyptians,** as Ex. xii. 29—36. **Amorites,** Jos. x. 5, 6, 12. **Phil., Ju. iii. 31.** (12) **Zidonians,** part of Hazor's army, Jos. xi. 8; Ju. v. 19. **Amalek.,** Ju. vi. 33. **Maonites,** Midianites,[a] it may be name of one of the Eastern tribes. (13) **no more,** temporary refusal designed to deepen repentance. (14) **go,** *etc.*, De. xxxii. 37, 38, so they would learn the vanity of their idol-worship.

A Divine taunt (*v.* 14).—We observe—I. That a departure from God involves men in sorrow and tribulation. II. That in their tribulation men find the objects they preferred to God impotent to save them. III. That God will sometimes leave men to discover from experience the worthlessness of their worldly choice. See if wealth or works will save in sorrow.

The idols of the heathen.—The Rev. John Thomas, missionary in India, was one day travelling alone through the country, when he saw a great number of people waiting near an idol temple. He went up to them, and, as soon as the doors were opened, he walked into the temple. Seeing an idol raised above the people, he walked boldly up to it, held up his hand, and asked for silence. He then put his finger on its eyes, and said, "It has eyes, but it cannot see! It has ears, but it cannot hear! It has a nose, but it cannot smell! It has hands, but it cannot handle! It has a mouth, but it cannot speak! Neither is there any breath in it!" Instead of doing injury to him for affronting their god and themselves, the natives were all surprised; and an old Brahmin was so convinced of his folly by what Mr. Thomas said, that he also cried out, "It has feet, but cannot run away!" The people raised a shout, and being ashamed of their stupidity, they left the temple, and went to their homes.

15—18. (15) **seemeth good,** they were brought to condition of penitential submission; returning in their very hearts unto Jehovah. (16) **put away,** the outward proof of sincerity. (17) **gathered together,** for a combined and serious attack of the country. **Mizpeh,**[a] a city of Gilead, on a height, and a strong position. (18) **begin to fight,** they were very dependent on the faith and enterprise of a leader. **head,** comp. ch. xi. 11.

Mercy for the truly penitent.—I. The repentance of Israel was marked by—1. A full confession of sin; 2. An acknowledgment of the justice of the Divine dealings; 3. A practical exhibition of their real sorrow of heart for the sin of idolatry. II. The mercy of God; manifests—1. His compassion for a suf-

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their marriage, used to go to a neighbouring headland and watch for his returning ship, or, lying in bed, listen for his footfall. So God waits for the returning prodigal. *b Roberts.*

Israel's cry is rejected

a LXX.

"Show us your God!" said one of the heathen at Buhapurum to a child who had been educated in Christianity. "I cannot do that," answered the child; "but I can soon show you yours." Taking up a stone and daubing it with some resemblance of a human face, he placed it upon the ground, and, "There," said he, "is such a god as you worship."

"Superstition is but the fear of belief; religion is the confidence."—*Lady Blessington.*

"The true instrument of man's degradation is his ignorance."—*Lady Morgan.*

Israel's repentance is accepted

a Ge. xxxi. 49.

"Travellers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that they do not even leave room for their

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families. How many men there are who fill their hearts with the idols of sin, so that there is no room for the Living God, or for any of His holy principles!" —*John Bate.*

Christianity allows no idols. As Dagon fell before the ark of the covenant, so have all the gods of the Pantheon fallen before the power of the Cross. So shall they continue to fall, till the kingdoms of this world are reclaimed to Christ.

"Hate shuts her soul when doveeyed mercy pleads." —*C. Sprague.*

B.C. 1161.

Jephthah dwells in Tob

a Ewald; Lange. b Wordsworth; Spk. Comm. compares 1 Chr. vii. 14–17.

"Let us live for God, and then we need not fear the gathering ills of the future. Let us live for God, and the joys and the sorrows of the coming year will alike be the forerunners to us of endless years in a cloudless clime.

his help sought against Ammon

a "They had ex-

fering people; 2. His willingness to answer prayer; 3. The condition upon which He bestows salvation.

Early trials of missionaries.—"I have generally," says one of the Baptist missionaries in India, "been three or four hours every day in actual contact with the people. Frequently I go and return in good spirits, but sometimes I am low enough. Good spirits are commonly necessary to dealing with my poor people, for there is generally a great deal among them that is very provoking. I frequently tell them that it is a regard to their welfare that leads me to do as I do; and the declaration is received with a sneer. On two or three occasions, a number of little children have been officiously seated before me, as an intimation that I say nothing worthy the attention of men. The people often call after me as I go about: one cries, 'Juggernaut! Juggernaut!' another, perhaps, says with a contemptuous smile, 'Won't you give me a book?' Soon after, perhaps, a third says, 'Sahib! I will worship Jesus Christ!' and a fourth exclaims, 'Victory to Juggernaut the Ruler!' Among these infatuated people, I fear that the utmost propriety in spirit and demeanour would be no protection from very frequent insults. In spite of the most affectionate addresses of which I am capable, and in the midst of them, the people, in malicious derision, shout, 'Juggernaut! Juggernaut!' and seem determined, as it were, with one heart and voice, to support their idols, and resist Jesus Christ. I hope He will, ere long, act for Himself; and then floods of pious sorrow will stream from the haughtiest eyes, and the grace now scorned will be sought with successful earnestness."

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **Gileadite,** or son of Gilead: either name of the country in wh. he was a foundling,[a] or the actual name of his father.[b] **harlot,** his father's concubine, or person casually met. Jephthah's *origin* accounts for his wild, lawless life. (2) **wife,** lawful wife. **thrust out,** an unrighteous act, after his father had given him shelter and acknowledged him. (3) **Tob,** district N. of Gilead, towards Syria. 2 Sa. x. 6, 8. **vain men,** idle men, preferring a wild independent life, these made him a leader. Comp. *Abim.* Ju. ix. 4: *David.* 1 Sa. xxii. 2.

Peculiar determining influences of life.—I. Note some of these in the case of Jephthah. 1. His illegitimate birth; 2. The taunts of which he was the subject on that account; 3. His expulsion from home: 4. His wild independent life. Much of his after life the outcome of some or all of these things. II. Note some of the special influences in the formation of other historical characters. III. Many men can associate important circumstances in their life; and influential elements of their character with peculiar trials or incidents. IV. These peculiar things often point to a special working of Providence.

4—6. (4) **process of time,** *after days,* after several years. **Ammon,**[a] for origin of the nation, *see* Ge. xix. 38. Usually associated with Moab; as Ju. iii. 12—14. (5) Comp. Ju. x. 18: this verse shows the person they fixed on to invite. Jeph.'s fame

as a freebooter had evidently spread. (6) **captain**, leader in war, and according to later usage in peace also: see the office and work of a *judge*.

The recall of the exile.—We may learn from this history—I. Not to assume that if we are thrust out we have genius, etc., that others cannot appreciate. II. If thrust out, so to act as to make our recall imperative. III. To beware how we thrust out any whom we may have to recall. IV. We have all in time past rejected Jesus, have sought unto Him!

7–11. (7) **ye hate me**, indic. that the leaders of his tribe had shared with his brethren in his expulsion. By this Jeph.'s mind was greatly embittered. (8) A prudent and soothing answer: they wished bygones to be bygones, recog. his military genius, and were willing to trust him. (9) Comp. spirit of Gideon.[a] (Ju. viii. 22, 23.) (10) **witness**, Heb. *be the hearer between us*: this is taking an oath of faithfulness to their word. (11) **uttered**, *etc.*, made solemn protestation that he undertook the work for Jehovah. **Mizpeh**, "the renowned old capital of land beyond Jordan."[b] No reason to think ark removed for the occasion.[c]

The elders of Gilead and Jephthah (*v.* 3).—This incident may serve to remind us—I. That the least we can do when we have injured a fellow-being is to confess frankly our wrong, and ask his pardon. II. That we should beware of despising or trampling upon any man, so as to make him our enemy, for we know not how much need we may have of his friendship and services before we die. III. That men of worth who are undervalued, disparaged, and ill-treated, should bear it with meekness and cheerfulness, leaving it to God to vindicate their good name in His own way.[d]

An Indian brave.—The Indian warrior Tecumseh, who fell in the late American war, was not only an accomplished military commander, but also a great natural statesman and orator. Among the many strange, and some strongly characteristic, events in his life, the council which the American General Harrison held with the Indians at Vincennes, in 1811, affords an admirable instance of the sublimity which sometimes distinguished his eloquence. The chiefs of some tribes had come to complain of a purchase of lands which had been made from the Kickafous. This council effected nothing, but broke up in confusion, in consequence of Tecumseh having called General Harrison "a liar." It was in the progress of the long talks that took place in the conference, that Tecumseh, having finished one of his speeches, looked round, and seeing every one seated, while no seat was prepared for him, a momentary frown passed over his countenance. Instantly, General Harrison ordered that a chair should be given him. Some person presented one, and bowing, said to him, "Warrior, your father, General Harrison, offers you a seat." Tecumseh's dark eye flashed. "My father!" he exclaimed, indignantly, extending his arm towards the heavens; "the sun is my father, and the earth is my mother; she gives me nourishment, and I repose upon her bosom." As he ended, he sat down suddenly on the ground.

12–15. (12) **sent**, *etc.*, first seeking to gain an understanding with the enemy, or at least a clear right to war. **to do with**

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pelled the *Zuzummim* fr. the region between the *Arnon* and the *Jabbok*, and had established themselves in the strong mountainous country about the sources of these streams, Nu. xxi. 24; De. ii. 20, 21."—*Ayre*.

his compact with Gilead

a "The circum. of his birth, and long residence in a heathen land, were little favourable to the formation of the highest type of character. Yet he has his record among the faithful, He. xi. 32."—*Spk. Comm.*

b Ewald. See Ge. xxxi. 48, 49.

c Wordsworth.

v. 11. *J. S. M. Anderson, Cloud of Witn.* ii. 190.

v. 8. "Virtue once in an age will work her own advancement; and when such as hate it chance to need it, they will be forced to prefer it, and then the honour will seem the brighter."—*T. Fuller*.

v. 9. "Jephthah's wisdom had not been answerable to his valour if he had not made his match beforehand. He bargains, therefore, for his sovereignty ere he wins it."—*Ep. Hall*.

d Bush.

his messages to Ammon

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me, what is thy purpose? what cause of offence has been given? against me, reminding him that Gilead was not, as he supposed, without a leader. (13) *See* on *v.* 4. marg. note. (14) again, in reply. (15) took not away,[a] position Jeph. takes is that Is. had not grasped the land, but it had been given them by God bec. of Amorite sins, *v.* 21.

First in the fray.—I. Jephthah vindicates the wisdom of those who made him their leader by at once assuming the offensive. II. By putting on this bold form the hopes of Gilead would be rallied, and the fears of the enemy excited. III. He who strikes the first blow in necessary conflicts obtains an advantage. IV. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Noble daring.—

I have a heart to dare,
And spirit-thews to work my daring out:
I'll cleave the world as a swimmer cleaves the sea,
Breaking the sleek, green billows into froth,
With tilting, full-blown chest, and scattering,
With scornful breath, the kissing, flattering foam,
That leaps and dallies with his dipping lip.
Thou'rt distant now, O World! I hear thee not
There's no pale fingers of thy fires to-night
Around the large horizon. Yet, O World!
I have thee in my power, and as a man
By some mysterious influence can sway
Another's mind, making him laugh and weep,
Shudder or thrill, such power have I on thee.[b]

16—19. (16) unto Red Sea, wh. they reached again after walking thro' desert *el-Tih*.[a] Kadesh, Nu. xx. 1. etc. (17) sent . . Edom, Nu. xx. 14—21. The embassy to Moab is not recorded separately. (18) compassed, went round, rather than force their way through. within the border, studiously avoiding offence. Arnon, the district in dispute. (19) Sihon, Nu. xxi. 21—26. Heshbon, on the western part of the high table-land, E. of the Jordan. Orig. belonged to Moab. my place, W. of Jordan.

The lie refuted.—I. Silence under a false charge not always the wisest attitude. II. False statements to be promptly met by a rehearsal of the plain truth. III. There are usually two sides to every statement. IV. Seek to have truth on our side; and facts to support us. V. What have those to say to Jesus who charges them with unrighteous opposition?

Accuracy of speech.—How many of the most mischievous falsehoods and calumnies originate from the want of a habit of strict accuracy! How often do suspicion and jealousy, and coolness, and even enmity, originate in families and in society, simply from an inaccurate description of narrative! And how often is there reason to fear that the innocent suffer and the guilty escape, in our courts of justice, from similar causes! It will require but a little attention to see the manner in which witnesses of real honesty, and under the sanction of an oath, often give their testimony, and the totally new aspect which the narrative assumes, under the cross-examination of a new advocate, to perceive the immense importance of cultivating a faculty on which the life of others often depends.[b]

[a] "When Is. went forth out of Eg. this territory was in the hands of *Sihon*, king of the Amorites. Israel itself had fought with neither Moab nor Ammon."—*Lange.* De. ii. 9, 19.

"Courage is like the diamond—very brilliant, not changed by fire, capable of high polish; but, except for the purpose of cutting hard bodies, useless."—*Colton.*

"No man can be brave who considers pain to be the greatest evil of life; nor temperate, who considers pleasure to be the highest good."—*Cicero.*

[b] *Alex. Smith.*

he describes the facts as to Israel

[a] Nu. xxxiii. 36, 37; De. i. 19.

"They that govern elephants never appear before them in white; and the masters of bulls keep from them all garments of blood and scarlet, as knowing that they will be impatient of civil usages and discipline, when their natures are provoked by their proper antipathies."—*Bp. Taylor.*

"Men suppose that their reason has command over their words, still it happens that words in return exercise authority on reason."—*Bacon.*

[b] *Sketches of Hayti.*

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20—23. (20) **trusted not**, comp. Is. promises.[a] **Jahaz**, bet. Medeba and Dibon;[b] southern part of territory of Sihon, but N. of river Arnon.[c] Not satisfactorily identified. (21) **land of the Amorites**, so not territory at all of *Ammon*, whose king he was addressing. (22) **coasts**, borders, districts. **wilderness**, district further east, beyond the high lands of Gilead. (23) **thou possess it**, seeing thou hast no claim to it, save that of occupation.

how Israel was treated by Sihon

a Nu. xxi. 22; De. ii. 26—23.

b Eusebius.

c Grove, thro' *Wordsworth.*

The gifts of Providence not to be thoughtlessly surrendered (*v.* 23).—I. The possession of Israel was the gift of God. II. What God had so given Israel was not to resign. III. Providence has been very good to us—nationally and personally—in the past. IV. What Providence has given it is our duty to hold fast. V. A careless surrender of mercy is a dishonour to God; a slight upon His wisdom.

Providence our guide.—

I stand like one
Has lost his way, and no man near him to inquire it of;
Yet there's a Providence above that knows
The roads which ill men tread, and can direct
Inquiring justice. The passengers that travel
In the wide ocean, where no paths are,
Look up and leave their conduct to a star.[d]

"Whoever knew truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?"—*Milton.*

"Gifts come from on high in their own peculiar form."—*Goethe.*

d Sir R. Howard.

24—28. (24) **Chemosh**,[a] subduer, desolater, the god of war. National god of the *Moabites*, but worshipped also by Ammon. Nu. xxi. 29. Jeph. appeals to the principle on which the king himself would act. Conquests in war were regarded as gifts of the gods. (25) **Balak**, who, though king of Moab, did not dispute Is.'s right to Sihon's kingdom. (26) **three hundred years**, round number: time enough to bring right of possession. (27) **Judge**, vindicator; let Him show who is right. (28) he continued his occupation of the land.

the king of Ammon rejects the message

a 1 Ki. xi. 7, 33; 2 Ki. xxiii. 13; Jer. xlviii. 7, 13, 46.

"It is very possible that the king of the children of Ammon at this time may have been a Moabite, poss. the king of Moab."—*Spk. Com.*

The gifts of the gods, and of God (*v.* 24).—I. Superstitiously or reverently men regard their possessions as the gifts of the higher powers. Christians speak of God. Idolaters, of their gods. Worldly men, of luck, fortune, etc. II. Those who connect their portion with the wisdom and love of God are alone contented. III. The degree of men's content is the measure of their confidence in the supposed or real giver.

Heathen worship.—The Ashantees sacrifice human victims, to the number of 100, at all their great festivals, some of which occur every twenty-one days. On the death of his mother the king offered 3,000 victims, and at the death of a distinguished captain, 2,400. At the funeral of a person of rank it is usual to wet the grave by the blood of a freeman, who is slaughtered unsuspectingly, while assisting in the funeral rites, and rolled into the grave with the corpse. A regular correspondence is supposed by them to be kept up with the invisible world; hence the king, wishing to send to any of his deceased friends, calls a servant, delivers to him a message, and kills him that he may carry it. Then, if he wishes to make any addition to the message, he calls another slave, and treats him in like manner, and with all the same indifference with which one of us would write a letter and add a postscript.

"Ignorance breeds monsters to fill up all the vacancies of the soul that are unoccupied by the verities of knowledge. He who dethrones the idea of law bids chaos welcome in its stead."—*Horace Mann.*

"Narrow minds think nothing right that is above their own capacity.'—*La Rochefoucauld.*

29—33. (29) **spirit**, *etc.*, comp. Ju. iii. 10, vi. 34, xiii. 25. **Jephthah**

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invades Ammon

his rash vow

a Lange. "The fatal vow at the battle of *Aroer* belongs naturally to the spasmodic efforts of the age: like the vows of Samson or Saul . . . or of Clovis or Bruno in the Middle Ages."—*Stanley.*

b "His Syrian birth and long residence in a Syrian city would make him familiar with such fierce rites."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 30, 31. *Buchanan Operra*, ii. 173; *J. Weemse, Exposition*, i. 184; *W. Romaine, M.A., Wks.* iv. 309.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d H. Dunster, M.A.

"The Fathers were almost unanimously of the mind, that he really sacrificed his daughter. They that have purposely handled this question will tell you, that *Tertullian, Athanasius, Nazianzen, Hieron, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Austin, Theodoret,* and others were of that mind, besides Jewish writers that might be produced. I will name but two, the *Chaldee* paraphrase, and *Josephus.*" — *Dr. T Lightfoot.*

e Dr. Cumming.

Jephthah's daughter goes out to meet him

a Comp. Ge. xxii. 2, 12, 16; Jer. vi. 26; Zech. xii. 10.

This declares the relig. charac. of his enterprise. passed over, or went through the country E. of Jordan, rousing the people to war; making Mizpeh his centre of operations. (30) vowed a vow, "Vows are the signs and expressions of the deepest surrender to God."[a] Comp. Ge. xxviii. 20—22; 2 Sa. xv. 8; 1 Sa. i. 11. (31) whatsoever, lit. *the comer forth, who shall come forth,* etc. Jeph. may have contemp. a human sacrifice, but not his daughter.[b] (32) so, resuming narrative fr. *v.* 29. (33) Minnith, 4 m. fr. Heshbon. plain, *etc.*, 7 m. E. of Rabbath-Ammon.

Jephthah's vow (*vv.* 30, 31).—We propose—I. To explain his vow. 1. The making of it. (1) No good man would make such a vow as this is supposed to be; (2) If made, the law admitted of an exchange; (3) The terms used on the occasion do not imply that his daughter should be put to death. 2. The execution of it. Observe the language—(1) Of his daughter's acquiescence: (2) In which is recorded his performance of the vow; (3) In which the commemoration of the event is recorded. All points to the fact that she was not put to death. 3. The honour God put upon it. II. To suggest some instruction from it. Learn—1. To avoid the rashness of Jephthah; 2. To imitate the piety of his daughter.[c]—*Jephthah's vow* (*v.* 30).—Consider—I. The nature of Jephthah's vow. II. The circumstances attending it: the victory, return home, Jephthah's sorrow and regret, his daughter's modest composure and heroism. III. The manner in which he is said to have accomplished it. Probably he *literally* fulfilled the vow, and actually slew his child.[d]

Jephthah's vow.—If we refer to the marginal reading, which is generally the most correct, we shall find it run :—"It shall surely be the Lord's, or I will offer up a burnt-offering;" in the original there is no word for it ("I will offer *it* up"), but the literal reading is, "Whatsoever cometh forth of the door of my house to meet me shall surely be the Lord's, or" (if I do not devote that object to Him) "I will offer up a burnt-offering." In the next place, Jephthah the father was not at liberty to kill his daughter by any law, much less on any vow made in haste. Human sacrifices were interdicted under all circumstances. And, further, in order to offer up a sacrifice there must have been a priest to do it. Jephthah was not a priest—he was a soldier. It is stated in the thirty-eighth verse that she went with her companions for two months, and "bewailed her virginity upon the mountains." She was secluded—separated from the world, and devoted to a sort of monastic life. In the last verses it is said that "her father did with her according to his vow" (not "he slaughtered her"); "and she knew no man; and it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah four days in a year." The literal rendering of that last expression is, that "the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament with the daughter of Jephthah;" . . . she was devoted to the immediate service and worship of God in a state of perpetual virginity.[e]

34—37. (34) timbrels, Ex. xv. 20. only child, Heb. word used as term of endearment.[a] (35) rent his clothes, sign of desperate grief. brought . . low, bowed me down. (36) if, not in Heb., and better omitted. do to me, making herself a willing offering for good of country. (37) bewail, *etc.*,

greatest grief of Heb. women was childlessness. A respite of two months is asked. This proved she died *willingly*.

Filial rejoicing in parental successes (*v.* 34).—I. A picture of a brave father returning from victory. The return home of men from scenes of conflict or toil. In defeat or trial their sweetest solace: in victory their best reward to be found at home. II. A picture of a noble daughter welcoming her father. Had he returned defeated, such a daughter would have soothed him; or wounded, she would have nursed him. Learn—1. Let fathers think of home in and after the day's battle; 2. Let children give their fathers a hearty welcome home.

Jephthah's daughter.—

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song,

My words leapt forth: "Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath." She render'd answer high:
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

* * * * * * *

"My God, my land, my father,—these did move
Me from my bliss of life that nature gave;
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning: 'No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers'—emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song.

* * * * * * *

"When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire.

"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still." [c]

38—40. (38) **companions,** who were with her when she met her father, and who would help her in bewailing. (39) **did with her,** many think there can be no question that he sacrificed her.[a] (40) No other allusion to this custom [b] is found in Scripture. **lament,** Heb. lends itself to the ambiguous feeling of the narrative, and may mean to *praise*, or to *lament*.

Modern Jephthahs, or parental immolations (*v.* 39).—In Jephthah's vow we see—(1) A good feeling overcoming the judgment; (2) A sense of right leading to an enormous crime. We shall go on the assumption that he actually sacrificed the life of his daughter; and he sacrificed—I. To the true God. Parents now offer up their children to false gods; to—1. Idleness; 2. Worldliness; 3. Ambition. II. Only the body of his daughter. Souls of children are often immolated now. Soul-immolation is more—1. Gradual; 2. Mischievous. III. From a noble impulse. No such feeling prompts parents' immolation of children in these

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b "Lament my virgin estate, that I am never to be a mother in Israel."—*Wordsworth.* *vv.* 34—40. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* i. 341. *v.* 35. *Dr. T. Taylor, Wks.* 495. "Take, then, no vow at random, ta'en with faith, preserve it; yet not bent, as Jephthah once, blindly to execute a rash resolve, whom better it had suited to exclaim, 'I have done ill,' than to redeem his pledge by doing worse."—*Danie, Par.* v. 64. "I cannot by any means agree with Dr. Kitto in his interpretation of this difficult and much controverted passage. The structure of the Heb. text does not require such an interpretation as he gives, and there are incidental expressions in the narrative which, in my opinion, are decidedly opposed to it."—*Dr. Porter.*

c Tennyson, Dream of Fair Women.

the daughter of Jephthah

a Ewald, Stanley, etc.

b "A salutary custom, warning posterity against the sin of making rash vows, and of tempting God."—*Wordsworth.* *v.* 39. *Dr. J. Lightfoot, Wks.* viii. 151; *Bp. Smalridge, Ss.* 220. *vv.* 39, 40. *P. Houghton, Ss.* 67.

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days. IV. With a terrible regret. Modern parents oft lay the souls of their children on the altar of sin with an utter indifference. V. With her full concurrence. Do worldly parents in these times get the consent of their daughters to be morally immolated?[c]

Was the daughter of Jephthah devoted to virginity?—Dr. W. L. Alexander's arguments in favour of this view are summarised as follows:—1. Jephthah must have expected to meet a *human* being on his return. 2. He clearly meant to *offer* such being in some way to the *Lord*. 3. He, as a worshipper of Jehovah, must have known that a human sacrifice would be *abominated* by Him. 4. His *own feelings*, too, would revolt from such an act. 5. Would a *judge* do what even the people detested? (2 K. iii. 27.) 6. The words of the vow do not necessarily mean a burnt-offering. 7. A man might vow to the Lord *persons* or animals (Le. xxvii. 1—13); the *former* being redeemable, the latter not, save unclean animals. 8. He did according to his vow; but had she been offered as a sacrifice, so singular a case would surely have been stated. 9. His daughter bewailed her *virginity*. Would she have thought so much of that if her doom were death? 10. Why, if she were put to death, should it be added that "she knew no man"? 11. The word *lament* should be *praise*, celebrate. Why praise if she were put to death? On the other hand, her virtue would merit perpetual celebration.[d]

c Dr. Thomas.

"A rash vow, that he could not come off with either breaking or performing it, but with sin. If he performed it not, he sinned in making a vow that he might not perform. If he performed it, he sinned in performing a vow that he might not make. . . . He is caught under a rash and sinful vow, as a man that hath a wolf by the ears, that whether he hold him or let him go he is in danger." — *J. Lightfoot, D.D.*

d Kitto's Bib. Cy. art. "Jephthah."

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

B.C. 1143.

1—3. (1) **Ephraim**, this tribe aimed at supremacy, and were jealous of honour gained by any other tribe.[a] **gather**, *etc.*, Heb., were summoned. **northward**, to reach the fords of Jordan. **burn thine house**, indic. the lawless spirit of the times,[b] and the overbearing pride of Eph. (2) **when I called**, not narrated; prob. they were invited at the outset. (3) **life in my hands**,[c] took on me the whole responsibility and peril.

the murmuring of Ephraim

a Comp. Ju. viii. 1—3.

b Comp. Ju. xiv. 15, xv. 6.

c Heb., *in the palm of my hands.*

Ephraim's anger (*v.* 1).—Note—I. That quarrels between brethren are usually most bitter and violent. II. That they who have done the greatest service to the cause of God are not secure from the greatest insults, even sometimes from the pretended friends of that cause.[d]

d J. Bush.

Anger in many instances arises from a cowardly fear of seeing or being told our own faults. When apparently enraged at others, we are really enraged with ourselves with being enraged at all. For further confirmation, consult your own soul after a fit of passion.

Life in the hand.—The Ephraimites had found fault with Jephthah because he did not call them to war against the Ammonites, but he vindicated himself, and addressed them in the language of the verse, as a proof of his courage, and that he had been exposed to danger. The Hindoos use the same figure; and the idea appears to be taken from a man carrying something very precious in his hands, and that under circumstances of great danger. When a son who has been long absent returns home, his father says, "My son has returned from the far country with his life in his hand;" which means, he has passed through many dangers. "Last night, as I went home through the place of evil spirits, I put my life in my hands." "The other day, in passing through the forest, I put my life in my hands, for the beasts were near to me in every direction." "Danger! truly so; I put my life in my bosom." "O that divine doctor! my son was at the point of death, but he brought his life in his hand."[e]

e Roberts.

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4—7. (4) **fugitives**, escapers. *v.* 5, the meaning of the taunt is—Ye Gileadites are no tribe at all, only runaways fr. Ephraim.[a] "Eph. arrogantly put itself in place of house of Joseph. to wh. Gilead also belonged, since it was the son of Machir of Manasseh."[b] (5) **passages**, fords: as Gid. Ju. vii. 24. **escaped**, fr. the battle. (6) **Shibboleth**,[c] this test word indic. diff. of pronunciation E. and W. of Jordan. The meaning of the words is not important. The Ephraimites could not pronounce *sh*, as French cannot *th*. (7) **the cities**, LXX. has the reading *his city*, viz. *Mizpeh*.

Shibboleth (*v.* 6).—I. In this case a clear test of nationality. Yet even here there might be some failures, through imperfection of utterance on the one hand, or dulness of hearing on the other. II. Words are often evidences of character. III. Men not to be condemned because they cannot, through mental or moral peculiarity, pronounce the creed of another. IV. One word—the name of Jesus—we should all seek to understand and worthily to mention.

The Shibboleth of a fast man.—Now, just listen for a moment to our fast young man, or the ape of a fast young man, who thinks that to be a man he must speak in the dark phraseology of slang. If he does anything on his own responsibility he does it on his own "hook." If he sees anything remarkably good he calls it a "stunner," the superlative of which is a "regular stunner." If a man is requested to pay a tavern bill, he is asked if he will "stand Sam." If he meets a savage-looking dog he calls him an "ugly customer." If he meets an eccentric man he calls him a "rummy old cove." A sensible man is a "chap that is up to snuff." Our young friend never scolds, but "blows up;" never pays, but "stumps up;" never finds it difficult to pay, but is "hard up;" never feels fatigued, but is "used up." He has no hat, but shelters his head beneath a "tile." He wears no neckcloth, but surrounds his throat with a "choker." He lives nowhere, but there is some place where he "hangs out." He never goes away or withdraws, but he "bolts"—he "slopes"—he "mizzles"—he "makes himself scarce"—he "walks his chalks"—he "makes tracks"—he "cuts his stick"—or, what is the same thing he "cuts his lucky!" The highest compliment you can pay him is to tell him that he is a "regular brick." He does not profess to be brave, but he prides himself on being "plucky." Money is a word which he has forgotten, but he talks a good deal about "tin," and "the needful," "the rhino," and "the ready." When a man speaks he "spouts"—when he holds his peace he "shuts up;" when he is humiliated, he is "taken down a peg or two," and "made to sing small." Now a good deal of this slang is harmless: many of the terms are, I think, very expressive; yet there is much in slang that is objectionable.[d]

8—10. (8) **Ibzan**, some think the same as *Boaz*. **Bethlehem**, prob. of Judah.[a] (9) **thirty sons**, *etc.*, indic. that he kept almost royal state, and entered into alliances with the other tribes. (10) **buried**, the indic. of respect for him maintained to close of his life.

The home relations of public characters (*v.* 9).—I. The home life and duties of public men apt to be overlooked in attention to affairs of state. Ambition, etc., tend to make one forget the claims of domestic life. II. The importance of a due regard to

Shibboleth

a Wordsworth.

b Lange.

c Word means both a *stream*, and an *ear* of corn; Ne. xiii. 24; Zep. iii. 9.

"How many have we that can hardly lisp out a syllable of good language, and if they attempt it, falter fearfully."—*Trapp.*

"The making of life and death to depend on the issue of this trial seems very hard, seeing that an innocent person who had an infirmity of lisping or stuttering might thus have perished."—*Assem. Annot.*

v. 6. Through a peculiarity of Heb. enumeration, but may be 2,040 instead of 42,000. At the last census of Ephraim (Nu. xxvi. 37), the whole tribe was 32,500.

The word Shibboleth has now come to be applied to the pass-word of a secret society; the secret by which those of a party know each other.

d A. Mursell.

Ibzan

a Josephus.

"A house without a roof would scarcely be a more indifferent home than a family state unsheltered by

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God's friendship and the sense of being always rested in His providential care and guidance." —*Dr. Bushnell.*

b W. E. Channing.

Elon, Abdon

a Robinson.

"God sends children for another purpose than merely to keep up the race, —to enlarge our hearts, to make us unselfish, and full of kindly sympathies and affections; to give our souls higher aims, and to call out all our faculties to extended enterprise and exertion; to bring round our fireside bright faces and happy smiles, and loving tender hearts. My soul blesses the Great Father every day, that He has gladdened the earth with little children." —*Mary Howitt.*

b Roberts.

family duty is implied by this brief history of Ibzan. The only thing said of him concerns the size of his family and the marriage of his children.

Ties of the family and the country.—The ties of family and of country were never intended to circumscribe the soul. Man is connected at birth with a few beings, that the spirit of humanity may be called forth by their tenderness; and, whenever domestic or national attachments become exclusive, engrossing, clannish, so as to shut out the general claims of the human race, the highest end of Providence is frustrated, and home, instead of being the nursery, becomes the grave of the heart.[b]

11—15. (11) **Zebulonite,** Ju. iv. 10, v. 18. **judged,** acted as civil ruler. No act of deliverance was accomplished by these men. Their civil administration gave some degree of unity and strength to the nation. (12) **Aijalon,** disting. fr. city of Dan. Josh. xxi. 24. (13) **Pirathonite,** so Ephraimite: *Pirathon* being mod. *Fürata*, vill. 6 m. W. S. W. of Shechem.[a] (14) **nephews,** marg. grandsons. (15) **mount,** *etc.*, a district of Eph. retaining this name from some settlement of Amalek, or battle with them.

A large family (*v.* 14).—To an Englishman this may appear almost incredible, but we have a great number of similar cases. A man of property has as many wives as he thinks proper to support; and such is the state of morals that he finds no difficulty in procuring them. I have known men who have had, in each of the neighbouring villages, a wife or concubine. Santherasega, Modeliar of Oodeputty, who has been dead about thirty years, had two wives and six concubines, who bare to him thirty children. The old man is described as being of large stature, and as having indulged in strong kinds of food. A friend of mine in Manilla knew a man who was the father of forty children. Lieutenant-colonel Johnson says, in his *Travels through Persia*, of the king, "The number of his children I could not exactly ascertain: it is generally agreed that he has at least sixty boys and sixty girls living; and many persons add, that there are an equal number deceased, so that their total number must have been two hundred and forty. He has already given in marriage twelve of his daughters; and about twenty-five of the elder of his sons are governors of the principal provinces and cities of the empire. Preparations of fireworks, etc., were at this time making at the palace to celebrate the nuptials of one of his sons, which were to take place in about three weeks."[b]

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Samson

his birth foretold

a "The history of Sam.'s acts in the W. of Pales. synchronises to a certain extent with those of Jephthah in the E. of Jordan."—*Bertheau in.*

b Stanley.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **Philistines,**[a] Ju. x. 7, first mentioned Ge. x. 14, xxi. 34. The name indic. their late arrival in the country—*the strangers.*[b] Settled in the maritime plains, the low country, on the S. W. of Canaan. **forty years,** this period ended with Samuel's victory.[c] (2) **Zorah,** now *Surah*, 14 m. W. of Jerus. **Manoah,** rest. (3) **angel,** Ju. ii. 1. (4) **drink not,** *etc.*, according to law, Nu. vi. 1—21. Sam.'s great strength was not to be thought due to artificial stimulus. (5) **no razor,** he was to be *wholly* dedicated to God. **Nazarite,** Heb. *Nazirite.*[d] **begin to deliver,** only begin. This partly done by making Phil. a laughing-stock, so removing the fear of them.[e]

Strength out of weakness.—I. The strong man was born at a time of great national weakness. II. Of a family weak in point of numbers. III. Was nourished upon weak diet. None should say his strength was artificially produced. Learn—1. In time of weakness look to God for help and strength; 2. Let the strong maintain their strength by reliance upon God, not by trusting to adventitious aids.

A childless house (*v.* 5).—This command was given to the wife of Manoah, the father of Samson, who had previously been sterile. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, was also sterile, "and she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thy handmaid, but will give unto Thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (Numbers vi. 5; Acts xviii. 18.) All who are married in the East have an intense desire for children. It is considered disgraceful, and a mark of the displeasure of the gods, to have a childless house. Under these circumstances, husbands and wives perform expensive ceremonies; and vow, that should the gods favour them with a son, "no razor shall come upon his head" (*i.e.* excepting "the corners") until he shall be ten or twelve years of age. In all schools boys may be seen with elf-locks of ten or twelve years' standing, giving a testimony to the solicitude, superstition, and affection of the parents, and a memorial of the favour of their deities.*f*

6–9. (6) **man of God,** or prophet: this her first thought. **countenance,** or general aspect. **terrible,** impressive, solemnising. (7) Comp. John Baptist.*a* (8) **intreated the Lord,** in faith at once accepting the message, only asking further direction. **teach us,** *etc.*, more precisely. (9) **sat . . field,** prob. in the position where the angel before met her, waiting for ans. to prayer.

The promise of a son to Manoah (*v.* 8).—Let us notice—I. Some of the attendant circumstances, together with the vitality of that faith with which Samson's parents embraced the message which the angel of God brought to them. II. The substance of the prayer recorded in our text.*b*

The mystery of childhood.—It is a mystery to us whether the acorn which is now wafted by the sportive winds into the cleft of the yawning precipice shall moulder to dust on its hard bed, or whether it shall take root, spring up, and in the lapse of ages become the stately oak to adorn the mountain's brow, or to form part of the noble vessel destined to plough the billows of oceans, or to yield material for ceiling the roof of palaces;—a mystery whether the grain of corn which is now borne under the plumage of the bird of passage shall drop into the pathless deep, and there perish amidst its restless waves, or whether it shall be carried to some distant desert land, there to grow up, and bear fruit, and, in the sweep of time, to cover the vast regions of the globe with the glorious honours of harvest: and it is a mystery whether the forest foliage which yesterday fell at your feet shall lie and rot amidst the rubbish of centuries, or whether it shall be deeply treasured up for geological ages in the bowels of the earth, until it petrify into that combustible mineral which shall warm the hearths and cheer the homes of unborn generations: and so it is a mystery whether the babe of a span long, who now lies in the

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c 1 Sa. vii. 13–15.

d A N-zir-Elohim, i.e. one belonging especially to God, and different fr. ordinary mortals, so long as he preserves inviolate the external sign and pledge under wh. he has been nurtured."—*Ewald.*

e Stanley, *Ewald.*

"O God, how justly do we raise our eyes from our tables unto Thee, which canst make water nourish and wine enfeeble us."—*Bp. Hall.*

f Roberts.

Manoah asks for guidance

a Lu. i. 15.

"God carries on his work gradually, and by several hands. One lays the foundation of a good work, another builds, and perhaps a third brings forth the top-stone."—*M. Henry.*

"When I see the strength of Manoah's faith, I marvel not that he had a Samson to his son; he saw not the messenger, he heard not the errand, he examined not the circumstances; yet now he takes thought, not whether he should have a son, but how he shall order the son which he must have."—*Bp. Hall.*

b R. B. von Hube.]

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[c] *J. Hutchinson.*

his early discipline

[d] *Spk. Com.*

"Except thou desire to hasten thine end, take this for a general rule, that thou never add any artificial heat to thy body by wine or spice, until thou find that time hath decayed thy natural heat, and the sooner thou beginnest to help nature, the sooner she will forsake thee, and trust altogether to art."—*Sir W. Raleigh.*

[b] *The Hive.*

"If our early years were passed in laying up store for futurity, in practising the affections within the circle of those whom God has given to be our nearest and dearest ties, in cultivating intellect, and acquiring useful knowledge, we should need no further security against the mistakes of after-life. Religion, virtue, wisdom, and good taste, would be our guides as well as our protectors."—*Mrs. Bruce.*

With a heart given to Jesus, a child is a sun that cannot but shine, a fountain which cannot but send out streams, a flower which cannot but fill lap of its mother's love, shall turn out for weal or for woe, shall prove a blessing or a curse to herself and to the world.[c]

10–14. (10) made haste, anxious her husband should see the angel, and fearing lest he might soon depart. (11) man, not yet discerned as certainly more than a prophet. (12) Trans.: "What shall be the ordering of the child, and what shall be his exploits?"[a] These had been answered, but Man. asks a repetition. (13) beware, take care to avoid. (14) of the vine, the grape-bearing vine, as disting. fr. other plants to wh. name vine was given.

The early training of Samson (a S. S. Address).—Sketch the character and circumstances of Manoah and his wife. In the prospect of having a child to train they are properly anxious. S.S. teachers are the subjects of similar anxiety when Providence places "young immortals" under their care. Their thought often is, "How shall we order," etc. Such a thought—I. Implies on the part of the teacher or guardian of youth a deep sense of responsibility. This may arise from such as the following considerations:—1. Every child has an individuality of his own: needs special and distinct training: the same ordering, and doing, will not suit all; 2. Every child has great possibilities and capacities wrapt up in its young soul: these have to be developed and directed; 3. Every child will, in great measure, become what the influences, rules, and teachings of his youth make him (as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined). Every child presents difficulties that unaided human strength and wisdom cannot successfully encounter and correct. II. Such a thought, if deep and sincere, will find expression in prayer. 1. Importance of personal and social prayer of teachers, etc; 2. To offer such prayer there are many encouragements; 3. The answer to such prayer may be confidently expected (ill. by the case of the child referred to in the text); 4. As prayer was the parent's preparation for the work of training Samson, so it should be the teacher's chief preparation for his work; 5. But prayer was followed by constant endeavour.[b]

Ordering of children.—Though in the days when Manoah the Danite lived knowledge was comparatively limited, it is evident he understood two things very well. The first was that even a child like Samson, destined by God for a position of eminence, and therefore the object of His peculiar care, would yet need to be subjected to parental guidance and training; and secondly, that the work of education must be carried on by the exertion of authority, and not by persuasion alone. We hear and see much of insubordination and disobedience amongst the young, and if it be excessive in our day it is to be ascribed to the fact that a slackness in commanding and a remissness in obeying pervade society generally; so that, as a great modern author puts it, we are in danger of losing that obedience which makes men free. This seems a paradoxical expression, yet what can be greater slavery than a subjection to evil passions or capricious self-will? But those to whose lot it falls to have to "order" or manage others will be most successful when deeply conscious that they are themselves under orders. Love is the law of the Christian's life and activity, but still it is a law, and it has both precepts and penalties. But in "ordering" a child, no doubt the great point is to ease as far as possible the pressure of commands which

must be enforced, not by explaining these so much as by proving that the person giving the order is worthy of trust and confidence. It is thus in some small degree that we are imitators of God, for His injunctions, being based on a sure foundation, bring those who are willingly obedient into a state of restfulness and peace.

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15—18. (15) **ready a kid,** offering hospitality. Comp. Ab.,[a] and Gideon. (16) **not eat,** so intim. his angelic nature. **offer . . Lord,**[b] comp. Acts x. 25, 26; Rev. xix. 10. (17) **thy name,** comp. Jacob's question.[c] (18) **secret,** wonderful,[d] unknown.

Hospitality (*vv.* 15, 16).—I. Note the conduct of Manoah towards the angel. 1. Courteous; 2. Kind. II. That, also, of the angel towards Manoah. 1. Adapted himself to human senses in a familiar form; 2. Came to teach and bless. Learn—(1) Some have entertained angels unawares; 2. The angels that others thought they were entertaining have turned out to be very ordinary mortals. *Curiosity.*—I. In this case curiosity sprang from a pure motive. II. Sometimes a host takes advantage of his hospitality to pry into circumstances of his guest unreasonably. III. The silence of the guest concerning himself and his affairs should impose silence on honourable entertainers.

Offered on a rock (*v.* 19).—The circumstances in the histories of Gideon and Manoah are well illustrated by some things mentioned occasionally by Doubdan, in his account of his journey to the Holy Land, for he speaks of many rocks which he found rising up out of the earth there, and some as parts of great rocks fallen down. Some of them are described in such a manner as shows they resembled altar-tombs, or altars. Speaking of his return from a town called St. Samuel, to Jerusalem, by a way leading to the sepulchres of the judges of Israel, he tells us (pp. 98, 99) that he found them in a great field planted with vines, in which were great rocks, which rose out of the earth; among them, one near the wayside was so large as to be hollowed out into several rooms, in whose sides were long and narrow holes cut out, proper for placing the dead in, even with the floor. When he was at Joppa, waiting to embark upon his return, he describes himself and his companion as placing themselves, after they had walked until they were tired, on the beach, viewing some Greek pilgrims, who were also waiting to take ship, and who amused themselves with dancing on the shore, as placing themselves in the shade of a great rock, newly fallen down from the mountains (p. 455). Rocks appear in this country: some in their original situation, rising out of the ground; others are fragments, that have been detached from rocky eminences, and have fallen down on the ground below. Of this considerable number of rocks, some were flat, or nearly flat, on the top, so as conveniently to be used for altars. There are some such now found in that country.[e]

the offering to the angel

a Ge. xviii. 3—5.

b Ju. vi. 18—20.

c Ge. xxxii. 29.

d Is. ix. 6.

v. 17. Honour. "Such as the Shunamite gave Elisha, and as that good woman in the *Ec. of Martyrs* gave Dr. Sands, who, departing the land for fear of Q. Mary, told her, who had been married eight years, and was childless, thatere one whole year was past she should have a son: and it came to pass accordingly that time twelve months, lacking but one day."—*Trapp.*

e Burder.

"Full in the midst the polish'd table shines, and the bright goblets, rich with generous wines; now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares, portions the food, and each the portion shares."—*Homer.*

19—23. (19) **with a meat-offering,** comp. Ex. xxix. 38—42. **a rock,** as temporary altar. **did wonderously,** as described in *v.* 20. (20) Comp. case of Gideon.[a] (21) **knew,** discerned he was a Divine messenger. (22) **surely die,** it was generally received idea that no man could look on God, and live. (23) **his wife said,** with much wisdom and appropriatness. No signs of Div. wrath had appeared.

Manoah's vision (*vv.* 22, 23).—Let us notice—I. The revelation

the ascent of the angel

a Ju. vi. 21.

vv. 19, 20. *Dr. E. Hawker, Wks.* ii. 19 and 514.

vv. 22, 23. *D. Gü-*

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son, Ss. 29; *W. Jay Short Disc.* i. 183; *H. Alford, Hulse. Lec.* 25.

vv. 22—24. *H. Hughes. Fem. Char.* ii. 1.

v. 23. *J. Hill. Ss.* 141; *Dr. S. Charters, Ss.* ii. 173.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c Turner's Polynesia.

Samson the subject of holy influence

a "The deriv. of this name fr. *shemesh*, the sun. Is of long standing among the Jewish expositors, and offers the best grounds for acceptance. Other explanations, *mighty, bold*, desolator, proposed by various expositors, fr. *Servius* to *Keil*, appear to be without any historical motive." —*Lange*.

v. 24. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*; *F. Quarles, Hist. of Samson*; *Sawin. Hist. Disc* i. 1; *Sir G. H. Rose, Script. Researches*; *R. W. Evans, Script. Biog.* iii. 96; *W. Bruce, Biog. of Samson*; *J. Williams, B.D. Char. of O. T.* 164.

"The holy seed in all ages has been prone to cultivate intimacies and form alliances with the world of the ungodly."—*Bush.*

made to them. II. The effect produced upon them. 1. In Manoah. fear; 2. In his wife. confidence. Learn—(1) To guard against low and unworthy thoughts of God: (2) To make a just improvement of the mercies he bestows upon us.[b]

Samoan king (*v.* 22).—Those who had the title of kings in Samoa were of old considered peculiarly sacred. They lived in a house isolated away from the rest, and kept up great dignity. To approach there was considered perilous. if unattended by certain purifications, the most common of which was to sprinkle the person with clean water. The evils dreaded were swelling of the body, death. etc. It was the opinion that some deadly influence radiated from the person of the king, and that this mysterious current was broken by sprinkling. In approaching "his majesty" on any political or other errand, the party, after sitting down, would call a servant to bring some water; dipping his hand into the dish he would then "sprinkle with clean water" his own person, and also the mat in the space between him and the king. This being done, he would deliver his message.[c]

24, 25. (24) Samson,[a] pronounced as LXX., and Josephus, *Sampson*. Heb. *Shimshon*. (25) **move,** stir vehemently. **camp of Dan,** *Mahaneh-Dan*, comp. Ju. xviii. 11, 12. The movings of the Spirit showed themselves in indignation at his brethren's wrongs. and in early feats of strength. **Eshtaol,** on the border of Judah. Jos. xv. 33, xix. 41.

The Hebrew Hercules (*v.* 24).—Notice—I. The circumstances of his birth. II. The character of this deliverer. 1. His austerity of manners; 2. His great strength; 3. His strange humour. III. The great lessons of his life. 1. God's providence is equal to every human emergency; 2. The world should see that deliverance is from a Divine, and not from a human source; 3. Physical strength and prowess may be allied with the meanest moral attainments; and therefore a man may be the weakest on the side where the true glory of manhood lies.

Examples of great strength.—The average weight carried by a stout porter in this metropolis (London) is two hundred pounds; but we are told there are porters in Turkey who. by accustoming themselves to this kind of burden from an early period. are able to carry from seven hundred to nine hundred pounds, though they walk at a slower rate, and only carry the burden a short distance. "The weakest man can lift with his hands about one hundred and twenty-five pounds; a strong man. four hundred. Topham. a carpenter, mentioned by Desaguliers, could lift eight hundred pounds. He rolled up a strong pewter dish with his fingers: he lifted. with his teeth and knees. a table six feet long, with a half hundred-weight at the end; he bent a poker. three inches in circumference. to a right angle. by striking it upon his left fore-arm; another he bent and unbent about his neck. and snapped a hempen rope. two inches in circumference. A few years ago there was a person at Oxford who could hold his arm extended for half a minute with half a hundred-weight hanging on his little finger" (Young's *Lectures on Nat. Philos.* Vol. I. p. 129). We are also told by Desaguliers of a man who. by bending his body into an arch. and having a harness fitted to his hips. was capable of sustaining a cannon weighing two or three thousand pounds: and not many winters ago the celebrated Belzoni, when first entering on public life, exhibited himself in the

theatres of this metropolis, and by a similar kind of harnessing was capable of supporting, even in an upright position, a pyramid of ten or twelve men, surmounted by two or three children, whose aggregate weight could not be much less than two thousand pounds; with which weight he walked repeatedly towards the front of the stage.[b]

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b Good's Bk. of Nature.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

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he wishes to wed a daughter of Philistia

1–4. (1) **Timnath,**[a] or Timnatha, present Tibneh, on border of Judah, but a town of Dan, 3 m. S. W. of Zorah. (2) came up, to Zorah, an ascent of wild rocky gorges.[b] (3) **uncircumcised Phil.**, with such the true Israelite may not marry. For use of word as term of reproach, *see* 1 Sa. xiv. 6. **get her for me**, usual for parents to conduct the negotiations, and make the usual gifts. **pleaseth me well**, lit. *is righteous in my eyes.* (4) **he sought**, that is, the Lord, who was overruling this for the destruction of the Phil. God's overruling does not free man's acts fr. wrong.

a Ge. xxxviii. 12—14; Jos. xv. 10, xix. 43.

"Situated on the undulating hills by which the mountain district is separated fr. the maritime plain, but reckoned among the cities of the Shephelah."—*Spk. Com.*

Marriage.—This subject teaches us—I. That the people of God are liable to imperfections. II. That our lusts and passions are to be resisted. III. That care should be taken in forming friendships or alliances of any kind with the enemies of God, especially matrimonial. IV. That one single circumstance—one affection, one habit, one act—frequently influences one's whole destiny. V. That a crooked policy does not eventually profit. VI. That God frequently works good out of evil, or overrules evil for good; and that God's purposes are frequently accomplished by means of persons and events apparently least adapted, or even most opposed. VII. That though God may pardon our sins, their consequences in this life are frequently irremediable.[c]

b Wordsworth.

Ep. Hall's Contemp.

Love at intervals.—These starts of affection serve but to give you a more thorough sense of the mutual hatred which immediately follows and fills you with bitterness of soul. Could you live asunder, or avoid all occasions of kindness, you might at length take sanctuary in indifference. A palsy might take the place of this ague in your passions, and once for all benumb those too exquisite feelings which contrariety, at present, rubs into rawness, and keeps perpetually alive. Time, which alleviates other miseries, would then cease to aggravate yours. What an enemy would you think him who should deprive your food of all its relish, or cook it for you with gall: who should rob your nights of sleep, poison every moment of your time with grief or vexation, throw all your affairs into confusion, and ruin both the morals and fortunes of your children! This enemy you are (I do not say to each other, but) you, the husband, to yourself; and you, the wife, to yourself; for want of considering that you cannot hurt or vex her, nor you hurt or vex him, without equally hurting, vexing, and tormenting yourself, for you can have but one and the same condition.[d]

c J. Bigwood.

v. 4. "God will not bear or endure commanding prayers. He that must have a temporal mercy, if he get it, may have a spiritual curse, but he is sure to have a temporal cross. So Delilah proved to Samson, who would not take his parents' counsel, but must have her whatever comes of it. But he paid dearly for his choice."—*Gurnall.*

d Skelton.

he slays a lion

a Tsi'meon.

b Names of surrounding villages

5–7. (5) **vineyards**, "such are still found in all these hamlets, along the base of the hills, and upon the mountain sides.[a] **young lion**, though not now found in Pales., names of places prove the lion once inhabited its forests, and esp. the

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bear traces of the wild animals he encountered, and used as instruments of his great exploits—Lebaoth (the lionesses), Shaalbim (the jackals), Zorah (the hornets).

r. 6. "That which added much to the glory of Samson's triumph over the lion was that when he had done this great exploit he did not boast of it. Many would have made the whole country ring of it. Modesty and humility make up the brightest crown of great performances."—*M. Henry.*

e Paxton.

he finds honey in the lion's carcase

a "This space of time was spent by the bride elect with her parents, in preparation for the nuptials."—*Jamieson.*

b LXX. and Josephus read, "When they were afraid of him."

"As Samson had not found his honeycomb if he had not turned aside to see his lion, so we shall lose the comfort of God's benefits if we do not renew our perils by meditation."—*Bp. Hall.*

"The favours of Phillistines have often some mischief or other designed in them."—*M. Henry.* "But here they behold a sudden prodigy, and, wondrous to relate, bees through wild mountain passes of Judah.[b] (6) **rent him,** without any weapon, or instrument. (7) **talked with the woman,** now properly betrothed to him.

The lion-killer.—I. True love will brave great dangers. Love for Christ does not shrink from possible lions. II. Real courage does not run away from danger. The Christian soldier will stand up for Jesus. III. Genuine modesty does not boast of great exploits. IV. Kind thoughtfulness will conceal personal perils from the hearts of friends.

Time of betrothal (*v.* 8)—Ten or twelve months commonly intervened between the ceremony of espousals and the marriage; during this interval, the espoused wife continued with her parents, that she might provide herself with nuptial ornaments suitable to her station. This custom serves to explain a circumstance in Samson's marriage which is involved in some obscurity: "He went down," says the historian, "and talked with the woman (whom he had seen at Timnath), and she pleased him well." These words seem to refer to the ceremony of espousals; the following to the subsequent marriage: "And after a time he returned to take her." Hence, a considerable time intervened between the espousals and their actual union.[c]

8—11. (8) **after a time,** Heb. custom required a space of time between betrothal and marriage.[a] The expression as here, *after days,* sometimes means, *one year.* **aside,** out of the path. **carcase,** by that time either parched up by the sun, or a whitened skeleton. **swarm of bees,** these very abundant. the land even called one of *milk and honey.* (9) **came .. mother,** they were with him, but he had left them in the path. (10) **a feast,** essential part of marriage ceremony; this lasted seven days. (11) **saw him,** observed his strength. **companions,** with appearance of honouring him, but really in fear of possible excesses.[b]

Good from strange sources.—We learn—I. That the trials we have conquered may become to us fountains of refreshment. II. The honey we procure from conquered lions will be of the sweetest we taste. III. The good we get from trials conquered may be made a source of refreshment to others. IV. Much of the honey of life obtained from the carcases of lions conquered for us by Jesus Christ.

The bees in the carcase (*v.* 8).—The opinion of Virgil (see marg.), however, is directly contradicted by another, which was held by some writers of the greatest reputation in ancient times. Aristotle taught, that the bee will not light upon a dead carcase, nor taste the flesh. Varro asserts that she never sits down in an unclean place, or upon anything which emits an unpleasant smell. They are never seen, like flies, feeding on blood or flesh; while wasps and hornets all delight in such food, the bee never touches a dead body. So much they dislike an impure smell, that when one of them dies, the survivors immediately carry out the carcase from the hive, that they may not be annoyed by the effluvia. The discovery which Samson made, when he went down to Timnath, may seem to contradict the latter, and confirm the former opinion: "And after a time, he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and behold there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion." But it is not said the swarm was generated there, but only

that Samson found them in the carcase: nor is it said that the lion had been recently killed, and that the carcase was in a state of putrefaction: the contrary seems to be intimated by the phrase "after a time," literally, "after days," one of the most common expressions in Scripture for a year. Hence the lion was killed a whole year before this visit to Timnath, when he discovered the swarm in the carcase. But the flesh of the carcase, which Samson left in the open field a whole year, the prey of wild beasts and ravenous birds, must have been entirely consumed long before his return, or so completely dried by the violent heat of the sun, that nothing but the skeleton, or exsiccated frame, remained. Within the bare or withered enclosure of the bones, which had exhaled their last putrid effluvia, the swarm, in perfect consistency with their usual delicacy, might construct their cells and deposit their honey. This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of Herodotus, who declares that bees have swarmed in dry bones.[c]

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all the belly hum amid the putrid bowels of the cattle, pour forth with the fermenting juices from the burst sides, and in immense clouds roll along, then swarm together on the top of a tree, and hang down in a cluster from the bending boughs."—*Virgil.*

[c] *Paxton.*

he proposes a riddle

12—15. (12) **riddle,** riddles are favourite oriental amusement at festive entertaiments. Sam.'s great deeds often attended with jokes.[a] **sheets,** Heb. *sedinim*, loose garments, shirts. **change of garments,** Heb. *chalaphoth*, outer garments, rendered *tunicas* by Vulg. (13) **put forth,** accepting his challenge. (14) Sam. had kept his secret even fr. his parents. (15) **burn,** *etc.*, indic. the wild lawlessness of the times. **called us,** invited us to impoverish us; they would have to pay heavily if they failed.

Samson's riddle, or the slayer slain (*v.* 14.)—I. There is a lion lying in wait for all of you. In the form of—1. Anger; 2. Falsehood; 3. Dishonesty. II. You must slay the lion of temptation or he will slay you. III. Temptation overcome a source of strength and happiness. Learn—(1) Despatch temptations immediately. If we stop to reason with sin it will get the better of us; (2) We must depend upon God's help. and look to Him in prayer for His assistance in resisting sin.[b]—*Unexpected good* (*v.* 14).—Regard the text symbolically. Apply this statement—I. To nature. 1. Generally; 2. The elements; 3. Convulsions. II. Conduct of Divine providence. 1. Personal and relative afflictions; 2. Worldly losses. III. Divine grace and the Christian economy. 1. Fall of man followed by declaration of covenant of grace; 2. Conversion; 3. Spiritual conflict; 4. Persecution; 5. Death.

The week of the marriage (*v.* 15).—The marriage feast was of old frequently protracted to the length of seven days: for so long Samson entertained his friends at Timnath. To this festival Laban is thought by many divines to refer in his answer to Jacob's complaint that he had imposed Leah upon him instead of Rachel: "Fulfil the week of the marriage, and we will give thee this also." This feast was called the nuptial joy, with which no other was to be intermixed; all labour ceased while it continued, and no sign of mourning or sorrow was permitted to appear. It may be only further observed, that even in modern times none but very poor people give a daughter in marriage without a female slave for a handmaid. as hired servants are scarcely known in the oriental regions. Hence Laban, who was a man of considerable property in Mesopotamia, "gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid. for a handmaid;" and "to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid."

[a] "He overflows with inexhaustible joyousness in word and deed, light-heartedness under the heaviest disasters, and sportive wit that accompanies him even to the moment of his self-chosen, tragic end."—*Ewald.*

[b] *v.* 14. *A. Pirie, Wks.* 3; *G. Burder's Vill. Ss.* 8.

"He was all alone in the vineyard, whither he had rambled from his father and mother (who kept the high road), probably to eat grapes. Children consider not that they expose themselves to the roaring lion, when, out of a foolish fondness for liberty, they wander from under the eye of their prudent, pious parents. Nor do young people consider what lions lurk in the vineyards, the vineyards of red wine, as

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dangerous as snakes under the green grass."—*M. Henry.*

b A. J. Gordon.

"Temptations, when we meet them at first, are as the lion that roared upon Samson; but if we overcome them, the next time we see them we shall find a nest of honey in them."—*Bunyan.*

c Paxton.

his wife obtains the answer

a Spk. Com.

b "It lay off the great road from Egypt, and was consequently of small importance in Heb. history, and apparently little known."—*Ayre.*

v. 19. "It is just with God to destine what enemies He pleases to execution. It is not to be inquired why this man is stricken rather than another, when both are Philistines."—*Bp. Hall.*

"What pretence of friendship soever he make, a true Philistine will soon be weary of an Israelite."—*Bp. Hall.*

c Roberts.

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he fires the cornfields of the Philistines

a Ge. xxxviii. 17; Lu xv. 29.

In Greece, also, the marriage solemnity lasted several days. On the third day the bride presented her bridegroom with a robe; gifts were likewise made to the bride and bridegroom by the bride's father and friends; these consisted of golden vessels, beds, couches, plates, and all sorts of necessaries for housekeeping, which were carried in great state to the house by women, preceded by a person carrying a basket, in the manner usual at processions, before whom went a boy in white vestments, with a torch in his hand. It was also customary for the bridegroom and his friends to give presents to the bride, after which the bridegroom had leave to converse freely with her, and she was permitted to appear in public without her veil. The money, says Dr. Russell, which the bridegrooms of Aleppo pay for their brides is laid out in furniture for a chamber, in clothes, jewels, or ornaments of gold, for the bride, whose father makes some addition, according to his circumstances: which things are sent with great pomp to the bridegroom's house three days before the wedding.[c]

16—20. (16) **wept,** in intense passionate entreaty. (17) **the seven days,** or the rest of the seven days. **lay sore,** pleaded vehemently. (18) **sun went down,** close of Eastern day. **what,** *etc.*, they try to give the ans. as if they had guessed it.[a] Sam.'s reply vaguely indic. he had found out their treachery. (19) **Ashkelon,**[b] one of 5 cities of Phil. **spoil,** apparel. (20) **his companion,** one of the thirty, *v.* 11. They prob. had loose notions of the sanctity of marriage.

Information dishonestly obtained.—I. In the case before us—1. The Philistines employed threats. They worked upon the fears of the woman: 2. She employed tears and so wrought upon the love of her husband. II. In other cases it is often obtained dishonourably from servants, children, etc., by employment of bribes, etc. III. Information so obtained may injure its subject without necessarily benefiting those who acquire it. IV. Revealers of secrets have their reward. Samson's wife hastened the ruin she thought to avoid (xv. 6).

Telling a secret.—In all parts of the world, I believe, people are pretty much alike as to their capability of keeping secrets. The Hindoos, however, improperly reflect upon the female sex in their proverb, "To a woman tell not a secret." That secret must be great indeed which will prevent a son or daughter from telling it to the father or mother. The greatest proof of confidence is to say, "I have told you what I have not revealed to my father." In proof of the great affection one has for another, it is said, "He has told things to him that he would not have related to his parents." "My friend, do tell me the secret." "Tell you? yes, when I have told my parents."[c]

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **within a while,** the Heb. as in ch. xiv. 8. **wheat harvest,** end of our April: the dry season. **a kid,** a common present.[a] **sam.** in anger, seems to have left his wife for a time. (2) **nated her,** Sam.'s conduct made this suspicion reasonable. The father treated Sam. considerately. (3) **blameless,** he meant that being now free fr. oblig. to the Phil. he would not be

treacherous if he did them a hurt. (4) foxes, jackals,[b] firebrands,[c] torches wh. would burn slowly, but blaze freely when blown by the wind. (5) shocks, *etc.*, lit. *fr. the heap of* sheaves to the grain standing in stalk.

Foxes and firebrands.—This history may be regarded as—I. An illustration of the punishment that awaits evil-doers. I. Dishonourable conduct does not prosper; 2. The wise are taken in their own craftiness; 3. Punishment often comes in unexpected forms. II. As an illustration of the cunning of a revengeful spirit. Evil reports are thus spread by tongues set on fire of hell.

The cornfields of Shephelah.—The hill on the south-east, looking towards Hebron, cannot fail to be recognised as that up which the stalwart champion carried the city gates; and on one of the mornings of our stay outside the walls we were roused at an early hour by a procession of Mohammedans, with flags and music, on their way to the hill, there to pray for the blessing of rain. The cornfields now, all along the cultivated tract of the Shephelah, are just such fields as Samson entered when he tied the foxes or jackals, tail to tail, and grimly watched his own "facetious outrage," as the creatures ran amongst the standing grain, and kindled it into a blaze, while the firebrands frighted them into mad haste. Vineyards there, like those of Timnath and Sorek, still bear fruit, and the names of villages are identified with meanings which recall "the lions" and "the bees," or hornets, as well as "the foxes," or jackals, of the mighty man.[c]

6–8. (6) **Timnite,** inhab. of Timnah. **burnt her,** *etc.*,[a] comp. threat of ch. xiv. 15. (7) **though,** "you have punished my wife:" or, "if you mean avenging, I also can play that game." (8) **hip and thigh,** prov. expression, "cut them in pieces, so that one limb lay on another."[b] It may be taken fr. the joints of the sacrifices, and so mean the great and mighty, the choice pieces. **rock Etam,** cleft of the rock, in Judah, poss. mod. *Urtas.*

One evil leads to another.—I. See this proved by the history before us. II. It is often manifested in common life. No side quiet so long as the other seems to have an advantage. The last blow, the last word. III. The ill effects of this. The party who dealt the last blow living in dread of retaliation; and he who received it nursing revenge. IV. Christ's law of forgiveness the only cure.

The sweetness of revenge.—

> But O! revenge is sweet!
> Thus think the crowd, who, eager to engage,
> Take quickly fire, and kindle into rage.
> Not so mild Thales nor Chrysippus thought,
> Nor that good man who drank the pois'nous draught
> With mind serene, and could not wish to see
> His vile accuser drink as deep as he
> Exalted Socrates! divinely brave!
> Injured he fell, and dying he forgave:
> Too noble for revenge; which still we find
> The weakest frailty of a feeble mind.[c]

9–13. (9) **went up,** endeavouring to secure person of Samson. **Lehi,**[a] the place so named here by anticipation. (10)

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b "These are gregarious, and abound in the neighbourhood of Gaza. Sam. may have caught them in nets."—*Wordsworth.*

c "He put two jackals together, tail by tail, and fastened tightly a fire-match between them. At nightfall he lighted the firebrand, and sent each pair successively down fr. the hills, into the plain of Philistia."—*Jamieson.*

cc. 4, 5. *J. Bryant, Obs.* 151; *F. Wrangham's Ss.* ii. 437.

c Dr. Stoughton.

he smites the Philistines and dwells on the rock Etam

a "Some take it that the Phil. burnt the wife and father-in-law out of revenge, as Sam.'s nearest relations. It is more prob. that they did it as an act of justice in favour of Sam., and in hope of pacifying his anger."—*Spk. Com.*

b Gesenius.

c Dryden.

"When our hatred is violent, it sinks us even beneath those we hate."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

he is bound by the men of Judah

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against us, men of Judah had given no offence. (11) went, marg. *went down*, situate on lower range of hills. (12) yourselves, he was anxious not to injure his fellow-countrymen in defending himself. (13) up, to Lehi.

Conciliation.—I. Note the state of Judah at this time under Philistia, and in dread. They needed a leader. They lacked faith in Samson, the only one who could have headed them. II. The proposition of Judah. To bind and deliver Samson. Yet these three thousand, with him at their head, might surely have done something better. Have there not been times when a timid Church has bound their Master, or their principles, for the sake of an unholy peace? III. The self-denial of Samson. He would rather be in peril than Israel should suffer. But he knew what he would do.

Muscular strength.—Muscular power is (other circumstances being equal) proportioned to the size of the muscle; but it often happens, that great power is required where bulk of muscle would be inconvenient or cumbersome. In such cases it is supplied with an increased endowment of nervous filaments, which make up by the strength of stimulus what the muscle wants in bulk of fibre. Many birds, for example, require great muscular power to sustain them in their long and rapid flights through the air, and owe its possession chiefly to the strong stimulus imparted to moderate-sized muscles by large nerves, which add nothing, or next to nothing, to their weight; whereas, had the greater power been obtainable only from an augmentation of fleshy fibres, the consequent addition of weight would, from the greatly increased difficulty the animal must have felt in raising and sustaining itself in the air, have gone far to counterbalance any advantage gained on the side of power. But in fishes, which float without effort in their own element, size produces no such inconvenience, and their strength, accordingly, is made to depend more on the volume of the muscle than on its nervous endowment—showing a beautiful adaptation to the mode of life and wants of the animal.[b]

14—17. (14) shouted, according to their custom,[a] and in joy of securing their prisoner. flax, *etc.*, half-burnt flax would have lost its fibrous strength. (15) jawbone, in the fright of seeing him break asunder the cords, the Phil. left him free to catch up the nearest weapon. The panic favoured him. (16) This is the victor's song. There is a humorous play on the word *chamor*, wh. means both *ass* and *heap*. (17) cast away, this supposed meaning of the word Ramath, in Ramath-Lehi.

Risen bonds.—I. How brave and exultant are these Philistines in the presence of their bound enemy. So the world, when the Word of God is unfaithfully bound. II. How great is their dismay and their destruction when the strong man bursts his bonds! So the word of God is a terror to evil-doers. III. How the strength of liberated Samson should have rallied poor, crushed Israel. Let the Israel of God rejoice for *magna est veritas, et prevalebit.*

The strong man's refreshment.—Samson, almost lost for thirst, after the conflict that he had with the Philistines, prayed to God, and found drink in an ass's jaws. Hagar, in the wilderness, despairing of her own life and her child's for lack of victuals, was fed of God, and comforted beyond her expectation. The

he slays the Philistines with a jawbone

[a] 1 Sa. xvii. 20, v. 15. *J. Jenkins's Disc.* ii. 82.
v. 16. "With the jawbone of an ass I have killed a heap, even two heaps."—*Gesenius.* The word is left untrans. in Le. xxvii. 16, Nu xi. 32, Ez. xlv. 11, 13, 14, and is left *homer*, a measure containing ten *baths*: but there is good reason for believing our trans. correct.

"The exhibition of real strength

"Men mighty-thewed as Samson was, dark-browed as kings in iron cast, broad-breasted as twin gates of brass."—*Joaquin Miller.*

"He only is great who has but habits of greatness; who, after performing what none in ten thousand could accomplish, passes on like Samson, and tells neither father nor mother of it."—*Lavater.*

[b] *Dr. Combe.*

poor woman of Sarepta, looking to die with her child, the day after the prophet came to her house, had her oil and meal so augmented, that she lacked not till the time of plenty returned. Therefore, wheresoever any lack happeneth, be it of corn, or such other necessaries, despair we not. Let us think with ourselves, that God is able at all times to increase our corn, lying in the barn, growing in the field, bring bread in the oven, yea, or in thy mouth, at His pleasure, as well as He did the oil or meal of the woman of Sarepta, or the oil of the debtor's wife, by His prophet Elisha.[b]

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18—20. (18) **athirst,** from violent exertion. **thou hast given,** devoutly recognising Div. aid. (19) **clave,** *etc.*, difficult to decide whether this refers to the jawbone, or still with some play on the word refers to the rock.[a] Prob. the *hollow* was a basin among the cliffs of Lehi. **En-hakkore,** the *supplication well.* (20) **days of Phil.,** while they retained dominion over Israel.

En-hakkore (*vv.* 18, 19).—Spiritual warriors need Divine help as much to keep them after the victory, as in the struggle. Like Samson, the arm that has gained its trophies is too weak to keep them long, unless God interpose. I. Samson's distress. Mental anguish as well as physical exhaustion. His young wife faithless; she and her father burned; dark forebodings of future defeat. II. His argument: "Shall I die?" 1. After working such a deliverance: 2. He reminds God of His relationship to him; 3. He further pleads that his victory will be turned into defeat, unless God interpose. III. His relief: God caused a spring to arise at Lehi. It was—1. Miraculous; 2. Appropriate: just what he needed; 3. Abundant: enough for others; 4. Effectual: it revived him; 5. Very simple: simplest means, in the Divine hand, work most marvellous results; 6. Opportune: just when he needed it, not before; 7. Commemorated: he named the place En-hakkore. God's goodness should be remembered in order to excite our gratitude, stimulate our faith, and fire our zeal.[b]

En-hakkore (*v.* 19).—All this passage affirms is, that in the place where Samson then was, and which, from this transaction, he called *Lehi*, or the Jawbone, there was a hollow place which God clave, from whence a fountain flowed, which relieved Samson when ready to parish, and which contin ued to yield a considerable supply of water at the time this sacred book was written, and possibly may flow to this day. Doubdan, in one single day, when he visited the country about Jerusalem, met with two such places. On Easter Monday, the first of April, 1652, he set out, he informs us, with about twenty in company, to visit the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. They went the same road the two disciples are supposed to have taken when our Lord joined them, when He made their hearts burn within them. A convent was afterward built in the place where our Lord is imagined to have met them. Only some pieces of the walls of freestone are now remaining, with some walls and half-broken arches, and heaps of rubbish, together with a great cistern full of water, derived partly from rain, and partly from the springs in the mountain there, particularly from a most beautiful and transparent fountain, a little above it, which breaks out at the further end of the grotto, naturally hollowed

is never grotesque. Distortion is the agony of weakness. It is the dislocated mind whose movements are spasmodic."—*Willmott.*

b W. Hugh (1546).

the water of En-hakkore

a "Beyond all question, the right trans. is, *the hollow place wh. is in Lehi.*"—*Spk. Com.*, so *Lange.*

"Some suppose that God clave the mortar, or socket, of the teeth of the jawbone; and this seems the true sense."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 18. *J. Milner, A.M., Ss.* i. 133.

b R. A. Griffin.

"If a fool knows a secret, he tells it because he is a fool; if a knave knows one, he tells it whenever it is his interest to tell it: but women and young men are very apt to tell whatever secrets they know from the vanity of having been trusted."—*Chesterfield.*

"The wisest, though offended, will be the first to seek peace and the readiest to pass by a transgression."—*Hawcis.*

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"None are so fond of secrets as those who do not mean to keep them; such persons covet secrets, as a spendthrift covets money—for the purpose of circulation."—*C. Colton.*

c Burder.

out in the hard rock, and which is overhung with small trees, where they made a considerable stop to refresh themselves; the water of this spring running by a channel into the cistern, and afterward turning a mill which was just by the cistern and belonged to the monastery, and from thence flowed, as it still does, into the torrent-bed of that valley from whence David collected the five smooth stones, of which one proved fatal to Goliath. Here we see a hollow place, a grotto, in which the God of nature had divided the rock for the passage of the water of a beautiful spring. It was a grotto in Lehi, in which God on this occasion made the water to gush out, and run in a stream into the adjoining country, where the exhausted warrior stood.[c]

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

B.C. 1120.

he carries off the gates of Gaza

1—3. (1) **Gaza,** Ge. x. 19; Jos. x. 41, xiii. 3. 35 m. S.W. of Zorah, a fortified stronghold of the Phil. **harlot,**[a] Ge. xxxviii. 14, 15. (2) **quiet,**[b] silent; taking no action: feeling security in the fastened gates. (3) **took the doors,** *etc.*, not lifting them off the hinges, but tearing up side-posts and all: *doors* refer to the leaves of the gate, *posts* to the side pillars, and *bar* to the inside fastening. **Hebron,** or the mountains of Hebron. Prob. a hill within an hour from Gaza.

The gates of Gaza.—I. Picture the scene. Philistines lying in wait, watching for morning to light them to their prey. The strong man walking off with the gates. The chagrin of Philistia. II. Illustrate it. 1. The truth bearing off its prison bars; 2. A Christian carrying off spoils from the enemy; 3. A sinner walking in darkness lightly beneath a load of sin.

The road from Gaza.—It runs across a dreary, parched plain, which, on the right and left, extends to the horizon, and in front is shut in by the blue mountains of Judah. On emerging from the olive-groves of Gaza, the desert was before us—bare, white, and monotonous, without a solitary tree, or the "shadow of a great rock," or a single patch of verdure. As we rode on we had overhead the bright sky and blazing sun; and beneath, the flinty soil, reflecting burning rays that scorched the weeds and stunted camelthorn, and made them crackle like charred sticks under our horses' feet.[c]—*The burden of sin.*—I find here Samson comes off from his sin with perfect safety. He runs away lightly with a heavier weight than the gates of Gaza—the burden of an ill act. Present impunity argues not an abatement of the wickedness of his sin, or of God's dislike to it. Nothing is so deserving of pity as the sinner's peace. Good is not therefore good because it prospers, but because it is commanded. Evil is not therefore evil because it is punished, but because it is forbidden.[d]

a "Samson keeps his vow of abstinence fr. intoxication, but is all the weaker and wilder with regard to the love of woman, as if he could here make up for the want of freedom elsewhere."—*Ewald.*

b "Orig. indic. that they *proposed* patrolling and watching all night, but instead were really afraid of him, and kept quiet all night."—*Lange.*

c *Dr. Porter.*

"Neither is it safe to count upon the weakness of any man's understanding who is thoroughly possessed of the spirit of revenge to sharpen his invention."—*Swift.*

d *Bp. Hall.*

Delilah

4, 5. (4) **Sorek,** near to Sam.'s home: not certainly identified. **Delilah,**[a] *delicate, languid, pining with desire.* Evidently a profligate woman. (5) **lords,** *etc.*, Jos. xiii. 3. **wherein . . strength,** having succeeded at first through his wife, they employ same means again. **afflict,** or humble, not directly threatening death. **eleven . . silver,**[b] if each gave this amount, the bribe was an immense one, nearly 2 talents (5,500 shekels).

Delilah.—I. If the enemy cannot overcome by force he will try craft. II. The strongest men have approaches to the secret

a "There is no reason to believe that she was either Sam.'s wife, *or a Philistine;* she was a light woman of the tribe of *Dan.*"—*Wordsworth.*

of their strength. III. Those who have power for great deeds are often themselves overcome by weak instruments. IV. Every sin or secret pleasure may be a traitor and in the enemy's pay.

The power of man.—The sea cannot roll up the mountain, however furious its rage may become; it must lie in its own bed. Neither suns, stars, nor comets, have power in themselves to sweep an inch out of their orbits. The mightiest animal of sea or land has no power to act contrary to the strong law of instinct. But man has the power to overstep the moral boundary of his being—to fly from his appointed orbit: he can deviate from truth, justice, benevolence, and piety. The great sun cannot say No to its Maker; a child may, and does.[c]

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[b] Ju. xvii. 3.

"Custom of success makes men confident in their sins, and causes them to mistake an arbitrary tenure for a perpetuity." — *Bp. Hall.*

[c] *Dr. Thomas.*

6—9. (6) **be bound,** Sam. playfully accepts her idea, and turns it into a joke. She thought some kind of cords would break the charm on wh. his strength depended. (7) **green withs,** twigs, or twists of vegetable stalks, such as used for baskets, **never dried,** so retaining flexibility. Number 7 let out one little piece of his secret (*v.* 13). (8) **she bound him,** prob. as a jest, piece of rude, rough play. (9) **in wait,**[a] hidden, ready to take instant advantage of his weakness. **the Philistines,** *etc.,* more point in this if she a Danite woman. **his strength,** *i.e.* the secret of it.

Where lieth thy strength? (*v.* 6.)—Where lies the secret strength of faith? It lies in the food it feeds on; for faith studies—I. The promise. 1. What the promise is: an emanation of Divine grace, an overflowing of the great heart of God; 2. Who gave it: it considers not so much its greatness as its Author. It remembers that it is God, who cannot lie—God omnipotent, immutable. 3. Why it was given: for God's glory. II. The amazing work of Christ: as being a clear proof of the Father's intention to fulfil His word. III. The past faith's battles have strengthened it, its victories have given it courage.[b]

Green withs (*v.* 7).—That is, any kind of pliant, tough wood, twisted in the form of a cord or rope. Such are used in many countries, formed out of osiers, hazel, etc. In Ireland, very long and strong ropes are made of the fibres of bog-wood, or the larger roots of the fir, which is often dug up in the bogs or mosses of that country. In some places, they take the skin of the horse, cut it lengthwise from the hide, into thongs about two inches broad; and after having laid them in salt for some time, take them out for use. This is frequently done in the country parts of Ireland; and is chiefly used for agricultural purposes, particularly for drawing the plough and the harrow, instead of iron chains.[c]

he is bound with green withs

[a] Not in *the* chamber, but in *a* chamber, an inner room."—*Wordsworth.*

"Every willing sinner is a Samson; let us not inveigh against his senselessness, but our own; nothing is so gross and unreasonable to a well-disposed mind, which temptation will not represent fit and plausible. No soul can, of his own strength, secure himself from that sin which he most detesteth." — *Bp. Hall.*

[b] *C. H. Spurgeon.*

[c] *Burder.*

10—14. (10) **mocked me,** it appears that Sam. knew nothing of the men who watched, so he carried on the joke. (11) **occupied,** more simply, *used,* or employed. (12) apparently Delilah provided the ropes herself, comp. *v.* 8. (13) **weavest,**[a] using his hair as yarn. **seven locks,** plaited or braided into seven folds; not hanging loose. (14) **pin . . web,** the whole weaving apparatus.

The bonds of temptation.—I. The seven green withs, as—1. Sensuality; 2. Intemperance; 3. Self-confidence; 4. Levity; 5. Indolence; 6. Self-righteousness; 7. Scepticism. II. New ropes, as newly invented pleasures, etc., specially fitted to individual

he is bound with new ropes, and with his hair

[a] "The loom was of very simple construction; the woof was driven into the warp, not by a reed, but by a wooden spatula; the extremity of the web

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was fastened to a pin or stake fixed in the wall or ground; and while Del. sat squatting at her loom, Sam. lay stretched on the floor, with his head reclining on her lap." — *Jamieson.*

b Trench.

he confesses the secret of his strength

a Nu. xxi. 4.

v. 17. "Et pro purpureo pœnas dat Scylla capillo." — *Virg. Geor.* i. v. 405. "This punishment pursues the unhappy maid, and thus the purple hair is dearly paid." —*Dryden.* Does not the fable here alluded to by Virgil of the evil consequences accruing to Nisus by the loss of his hair, and his revenging himself on Scylla, remind us of Samson and his revenge on the Philistines?

b Bush.

c Dr. Macleod.

he falls into the hands of the Philistines

v. 20. *T. Cruse, Ss.* 125.

v. 21. *J. C. Dieterle, Antiq.* 336.

a W. B. Carpenter.

"It is very amusing to see a full-grown son or a

cases. III. Locks of hair: hitherto the bonds were of foreign substances; they are now part of himself. IV. Samson dallied with temptation; but V. In the strength that God gave he rent the bonds and escaped.

Occupy (*v.* 11).—He now occupies who has in present possession, but the word involved once the further significance of using, employing, laying out that which was thus possessed; and by an "occupier" was meant a trader or retail dealer. Thus:—"He [Eumenes] made as though he had occasion to occupy money, and so borrowed a great sum of them [*Plutarch's Lives*]."[b]

15–17. (15) **heart . . me,** confidence, opening of heart, ever the true sign of love. (16) **pressed him,** with passionate entreaties. **vexed,** [a] *etc.*, worried, tired out. Comp. previous case, ch. xiv. 16. (17) **all his heart,** ceased to joke, and revealed his secret. Not expecting Del. to take advantage of his secret. He suspected no treachery; but the way of evil is the way of danger. **shaven,** the preservation of his locks was sign of faithfully keeping the Nazarite vow.

Samson's fall (*v.* 17).—Learn hence—I. That fidelity is never to be expected from those who show an utter unfaithfulness to God, and have stifled and triumphed over conscience. II. That when the heart is infatuated by unlawful desire, repeated warnings of danger will be disregarded. III. That they who feel themselves unable to resist the importunity of their tempters should instantly fly from their dangerous presence.[b]

Strong in Him.—I was requested by a brother minister, who was unwell, to go and visit a dying boy. He told me before some remarkable things of this boy. He was eleven years of age, and during three years' sickness had manifested the most patient submission to the will of God, with a singular enlightenment of the Spirit. I went to visit him. He had suffered the most excruciating pain. For years he had not known one day's rest. I gazed with wonder at the boy. After drawing near to him, and speaking some words of sympathy, he looked at me with his blue eyes—he could not move, it was the night before he died—and breathed into my ear these few words, "I am strong in Him." The words were few, and uttered feebly: they were the words of a feeble child, in a poor home, where the only ornament was that of a meek, and quiet, and affectionate mother; but these words seemed to lift the burden from the very heart, they seemed to make the world more beautiful than it ever was before; they brought home to my heart a great and blessed truth. May all of us be strong in Him.

18–20. (18) **lords,** *etc.*, whose large bribe she was anxious to secure. (19) **upon her knees,** with his head on her knees; so she could not move to cut the hair herself. **began to afflict,** turned to insult him; testing the effect of her act. (20) **wist not,** knew not. **departed,** fr. one whose vow was now broken.

Samson's fall (*v.* 20).—Introduction:—Samson's birth, glory, and deeds to the time of his fall. Learn from the story—I. The absolute necessity there is of our achieving a nobler morality, a higher level of religion, than is to be found in the mere conventional standards which are rife amongst us. II. That we should on no account sacrifice our convictions. III. That temptation

comes gradually. IV. That there is something in our constitution which makes the subtle snares of sin all the more dangerous; with every sin there comes a blunting of that moral capacity by which we detect its presence. Conclusion:—(1) Cultivate your convictions; (2) Preserve the consecration of your whole life to God.[a]—*Danger of declension in religion.*—I. What are we to understand by this departure of our Lord? It implies the presence and prevalence of an enemy. II. What are the signs which attend such a departure? III. The dreadful consequences of the Lord's departing from us. IV. Application we should make of this subject. 1. Look at sin; 2. See how weak man is; 3. Consider the holiness of God; 4. The sequel gives us an astonishing view of God's goodness and compassion.[b]

Latent power.—It is impossible to over-estimate, or rather to estimate, the power that lies latent in our churches. We talk of the power that was latent in steam—latent till Watt evoked its spirit from the waters, and set the giant to turn the iron arms of machinery. We talk of the power that was latent in the skies till science climbed their heights, and, seizing the spirit of the thunder, chained it to our surface, abolishing distance, outstripping the wings of time, and flashing our thoughts across rolling seas to distant continents. Yet what are these to the moral power that lies asleep in the congregations of our country and of the Christian world![c]

21—24. (21) **took him, a number** rushing upon him, still half afraid of him. **put out,**[a] Heb. bored out; prob. with red-hot iron, completing thus his helplessness. **fetters,** two chains; one on each foot. **grind,**[b] as a slave. (22) Intended to indicate repentance and return of heart to God.[c] (23) **Dagon,**[d] fr. *dag*, a fish, the national god of the Phil. **our God,** *etc.*, the true God surely vindicates Himself when His glory is thus taken away.[e] (24) **slew,** Heb. *multiplied our slain.*

Samson in the toils.—Teaches us—I. the blinding nature of sin. II. The tender mercies of the wicked. III. The world's servile work. IV. The long-suffering pity of God. V. The vain boastfulness of the ungodly.

Putting out the eyes.—With the Greeks and Asiatics, the way of putting out the eyes, or blinding, was not by pulling or cutting out the eyes, as some have imagined, but by drawing or holding a red-hot iron before them. This method is still in use in Asia. According to Chardin, however, the pupils of the eyes were pierced and destroyed on such occasions. But Thevenot says, that "the eyes, in these barbarous acts, are taken out whole, with the point of a dagger, and carried to the king in a basin." He adds, that, "as the king sends whom he pleases to do that cruel office, some princes are so butchered by unskilful hands, that it costs them their lives." In Persia, it is no unusual practice for the king to punish a rebellious city or province by exacting so many pounds of eyes; and his executioners, accordingly, go and scoop out from every one they meet, till they have the weight required.[f]

25—27. (25) **merry,** as feasts attended such sacrifices, doubtless merry with wine. **make us sport,**[a] either meaning to taunt and insult him, or to set him dancing and making music for them, or to hear his jokes and riddles, or to see his rough

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husband asleep on his mother's or wife's knees. The plan is as follows:—The female sits cross-legged on the carpet or mat, and the man having lain himself down, puts his head in her lap, and she gently taps, strokes, sings, and soothes him to sleep."—*Roberts.*

b R. Cecil. M.A.

"It is better for Samson to be blind in prison than to abuse his eyes in Sorek; yea, I may safely say he was more blind when he saw licentiously than now that he sees not; he was a greater slave when he served his afflictions than now grinding for the Philistines. The loss of his eyes shows him his sin, neither could he see how ill he had done till he saw not."—*Jip. Hall.*

c Dr. Guthrie.

his eyes are put out

a Nu. xvi. 14; 2 Ki. xxv. 7; Je. xxxix. 7.

b Ex. xi. 5, xii. 29; Is. xlvii. 2; La. v. 13.

c "Prob. his prison and his blindness taught him humility and dependence on God," n. 28.—*Wordsworth.*

d "His image was that of the trunk of a fish, with head and hands of a man."—*Stanley; Kitto.*

e Ac. xii. 20—23.

f Burder.

he makes sport for his enemies

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giant pranks. **pillars,**[b] supporting the flat roof, and in front of the building. (26) **feel,** *etc.*, feigning weariness. (27) **lords** . . **there,** inside the building. **on the roof,** wh. formed kind of amphitheatre.

The boy who led Samson.—I. He was one of the Philistines, who probably took part in their sport. II. He was an element of their scorn. A boy is enough to lead one who had slain a thousand men. III. He was ignorant of the strength of him he led. IV. In leading out Samson to be a pastime for others, he was unconsciously leading on his own destruction. Learn—1. Let boys beware how they join in the sports of the wicked; 2. The thing, or person, or truth they deride may be the instrument of their ruin.

Houses in the East (*v.* 27).—The method of building in the East may assist us in accounting for the particular structure of the temple or house of Dagon, and the great number of people that were buried in its ruins, by pulling down the two principal pillars upon which it rested. About three thousand persons crowded the roof, to behold while the captive champion of Israel made sport to his triumphant and unfeeling enemies. Samson, therefore, must have been in a court, or area, beneath; and, consequently, the temple will be of the same kind with the ancient τεμενη, or sacred inclosures, which were only surrounded, either in part or on all sides, with some plain or cloistered buildings. Several palaces and *dou-ranas*, as the halls of justice are called in these countries, are built in this fashion, in whose courts wrestlers exhibit for the amusement of the people on their public festivals and rejoicings; while the roofs of these cloisters are crowded with spectators, that behold their feats of strength and agility. When Dr. Shaw was at Algiers he frequently saw the inhabitants diverted in this manner, upon the roof of the dey's palace; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, has an advanced cloister over against the gate of the palace, made in the form of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. In such open structures as these, the great officers of state distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of their provinces. Here, likewise, they have their public entertainments, as the lords of the Philistines had in the temple of their god. Supposing, therefore, that in the house of Dagon was a cloistered building of this kind, the pulling down of the front or centre pillars which supported it, would alone be attended with the catastrophe which happened to the Philistines.[c]

28–31. (28) **two eyes,** exactly, *for one of my two eyes.* (29) **middle pillars,** indic. that there were others. (30) **dead,** *etc.*, obs. the play on words, making the sentence a "touch of triumphant satire." (31) **came down,** taking advantage of the general excitement to get possession of Sam.'s body. **Manoah,** who had previously died. **judged,** as deliverer only, apparently not as civil ruler.

Samson's character and end (*v.* 28).—Consider—I. His character. He was too much actuated by a spirit of—1. Vindictiveness; 2. Vainglory; 3. Lewdness and incontinence. II. His end. Improvement of the subject:—For—(1) Warning; (2) Encouragement.[a]

Ancient and modern Gaza.—There is an identity of name, a

[a] "He is called for the last time to exercise the well-known raillery of his character; he appears as the great jester or buffoon of the nation. The word employed expresses alike the roars of laughter and the wild gambols with wh. he 'made them sport.'"—*Stanley.*

[b] "The roofs in Gaza were then flat, as they are now. Most of the town is built on hills, wh. have declivities exceedingly steep. The temple was erected over one of these, and in such a position, if the central columns were taken out, the whole edifice would be precipitated down the hill in ruinous confusion."—*Thomson.*

v. 25. *A. Macdonald, Ss.* 391.

[c] *Paxton.*

his death

v. 28–30. *J. G. Dowling, Ss.* 112.

v. 30. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 406.

v. 31. *J. S. M. Anderson, Coud of Wits.* ii. 217.

[a] Promise was that I should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver. Ask

continuity of history; but, as we learn from Jerome, scarcely a vestige of old Gaza remained in his day, and the new town was built on a different site from the old one. The sand has long encroached upon the neighbourhood, and wave after wave has rolled up from the Mediterrancan, so that, looking from an eminence, it is as if an immense snow-storm had fallen on the fields, and drifted over the gardens. Under that sand, hewn stones, as of ancient buildings, have been discovered, and pottery and marble may be scen in the hollows. Walls, fragments of buildings, and remains of foundations may still be found, indicating the existence of the former Gaza, as distinguished from the present. The tragical fate of the great Hebrew hero is one of the chief memories lingering round the city; and a curiously travestied version of his death, in the form of a Mohammedan legend, is still given to travellers. Two prostrate columns, one fractured in the middle, are pointed out, in a pathway leading up to the governor's house. "Once on a time," said the people to our dragoman, as we passed by the columns, "there was a good Mussulman, very strong, who fought with the infidels (Christians), and at last pulled a large temple down in which they were assembled, and they were crushed beneath the ruins." [b]

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for this great deliverer now, and find him eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves, himself in bonds under Philistian yoke. Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt Divine prediction: what if all foretold had been fulfilled but through mine own default."—*Milton.*

a C. Simeon. M.A.

b Dr. Stoughton.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

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1—5. (1) **mount Ephraim,** Jos. xxiv. 30. **Micah,** word means. *who is like Jehovah.* (2) **eleven hundred,** *etc.*, sum noticed ch. xvi. 5. **taken from thee,** indic. lawlessness of the times. **cursedst,** Heb. *adjurest me by God:* though not immediately, yet afterwards Micah feared this curse, and *therefore* gave up the money. (3) **dedicated . . son,** he need not have taken it therefore, **graven,** *etc.*,[a] figures were first molten, and then finished off with graving tool. (4) the other 900 shekels were spent in fitting up the chapel. (5) **teraphim,** Ge. xxxi. 19—35. **sons,** not a Levite.

Micah

he robs his mother

a "Some have inferred fr. Ju. xviii. 14—18, that the word rendered molten image was only like a *pedestal* to the graven image, but this is hardly probable." — *Wordsworth.*

Confession and restitution.—We have here—I. A son who robbed his mother. 1. Perhaps her careful savings; 2. Intended by her for her son's future use. The property of which by wastefulness or theft we deprive our parents may have been intended for our good. Such a son is not only guilty of theft, but an injurer of self. II. A son confessing his sin and restoring his ill-gotten gains. But it does not appear that he confessed his sin to God. III. A mother blessing her son on his reformation. IV. A mother thoughtlessly surrendering that of which she had been sinfully deprived. She might have been sure that he who had the heart to rob his mother would not be likely to use the money well.

Bp. Hall. Contemp.

Restitution.—Two Christian chiefs, Tati and Ahuriro, were walking together by the waterside, when they came to a place where a fisherman had been employed in making or sharpening hooks, and had left a large file (a valuable article in Taheiti) lying on the ground. The chiefs picked it up; and as they were proceeding, one said to the other, "This is not ours. Is not our taking it a species of theft?" "Perhaps it is," replied the other; "yet as the owner is not here, I do not know who has a greater right to it than ourselves." "It is not ours," said the former,

"Honesty! A name scarce echo to a sound—honesty! Attend the stately chambers of the great—it dwells not there, nor in the trading world. Speaks it in counsels? No, the sophist knows to laugh it thence."—*Havard.*

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[b] *Mr. Ellis.*

the law of the lawless

v. 6. *Bp. Andrewes, Sr.* v. 169; *Sydney Smith, Sr.* 411; *Bp. Cartwright, Assize S.*; *Bp. Chandler, Ser.*

"Wish you to know if a soul is of free being and temper, put to the proof his respect for the magistrates." — *Rivarol.*

"A man must first govern himself, ere he be fit to govern a family; and his family, ere he be fit to bear the government of the commonwealth."—*Sir W. Raleigh.*

"The Spartans and Spaniards have been noted to be of small dispatch: *Mi venga la muerte de Spagna;* let my death come from Spain: for then it will be sure to be long in coming."—*Bacon.*

[a] *Quiver.*

Micah and the Levite

[a] "Bethlehem of the family of Judah," leaving out the first Judah."—LXX.

[b] Heb. words are *Gershom* as xviii. 30. "It is impossible, not to suspect that the true reading here too is, *the son of Gershom.*" — *Spk. Com.*

and we had better give it away." After further conversation, they agreed to give it to the first person they met, which they did, telling him they had found it, and requested that if he heard who had lost such a thing, he would restore it.[b]

6. The writer of the book evidently lived when there was a king. Comp. De. xii. 8; Ju. xviii. 1, xix. 1, xxi. 25; no settled government, restraining evil doers.

The law of the lawless.—I. A circumstance assumed. "No king in Israel." But was there really no king? There was, but unacknowledged—God was their King: they were rebels. II. An unlawful law of life, "right in their own eyes." Inclination no safe rule. Such "right" may be in the worst sense wrong, to self, one's neighbour, and God. III. The truest liberty is doing right in the sight of God.

Lawlessness; the Gordon riots.—Lord George Gordon, the leader and originator of this rebellious movement, is described by Lord Mahon as an ignorant fanatic, and the rebellion itself a sudden meteor, having its origin in the foulest marshes. Rash, brainless, and impetuous, Lord George became the tool of designing demagogues. No project was too wild, no deed too daring, for a nature so defiant and ballastless; and as this kind of blustering noisy carriage often impresses weak minds, crowds flocked to become his followers, and a mighty array of fools, knaves, and rebels united in his cause. Their behaviour was just such as one might expect from such a union, and in a camp were discipline and order were unknown. They paraded the streets, knocked down the watchmen at night, the beadles by day, upset the carriages of the statesmen and peers, and on their way to Parliament dragged them out of their carriages, pulled off their wigs, and rolled these grave dignitaries in the mud. They went even further, and sought to obtain forcible possession of the House of Commons itself. But here one man's cool bravery cowed their impudent clamour. Colonel Murray, a relation of Lord George Gordon's, addressed his traitorous kinsman thus: "My Lord George, do you really mean to bring your rascally adherents into the House of Commons? If you do, the first man of them that enters, I will plunge my sword not into his body but into yours." This silenced the valiant leader, who immediately withdrew, and, quietly retiring to the eating-room of the House, he threw himself into a chair; and while Mr. Bowen, the chaplain, sought to improve the occasion by advice and reproof, he either fell asleep, or pretended to do so.[a]

7–9. (7) **Bethlehem-judah,**[a] Ge. xxxv. 19. **family,** tribe; Ju. xiii. 2. **sojourned there,**[b] poss. indic. that he was a *wanderer,* tarrying awhile at Beth. (8) **out . . from,** simply, *from the city of Beth.* **mount,** or hill country. (9) **go to sojourn** = wander about as having no settled maintenance.

The blessings of home.—I count as the greatest loss that the young can sustain in coming hither, the loss of home, as I count as the greatest blessing which the young can enjoy to be that training which a good home affords. Some there are to whom home is nothing but a grievance, and whose remembrance of home is a remembrance of sorrow. Let us believe that there are few such. Let us believe that in this happy land by far the greatest number have occasion all their life long to look back

with thanksgiving to the experience and the memories of home, and that this word rings out pleasure to them as long as they are able to utter it or hear it uttered. Home is God's natural training ground. It has its laws, its restraints, and its compensations. It has its duties, its penalties, and its rewards. Although it is not omnipotent, though it often fails, yet, on the whole, it holds the young everywhere with a most salutary influence.[c]

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c *H. W. Beecher.*

the Levite dwells with Micah

10—13. (10) **father,** or spiritual guide. **priest,** conductor of sacrifices and worship. **ten shekels,** Wordsworth says, *a paltry pittance*, but this depends on the value of money in that age. **a suit,** marg. a double suit. Heb. an order of garments. (11) **as . . sons,** treated him as one of the family; shows shame of his running away.[a] (12) **his priest,** not the Lord's. Really no priest, as not of the family of Aaron. (13) The expression of self-deception and superstition.

The religious want and mistake of humanity.—I. The great religious want of humanity. 1. A friendly relation with the Eternal; 2. Some mediator to procure this friendship. II. The great religious mistake of humanity. 1. That there was something morally meritorious in merely supporting a minister of the Lord; 2. That the priest would have some special power with Heaven to obtain good; 3. That by his formally attending to the religious ordinances which this Levite prescribed "the Lord would do him good."

Micah and his Levite (*v.* 13).—The self-complacency of Micah may serve to reprove some popular delusions in religion of a later day. I. Confidence in external worship. II. Satisfaction with theoretical knowledge. Obedience is the life-blood of religion. It must be free and cheerful, extensive, sincere, constant, evangelical. III. Excuses for allowed sins. IV. False views of the character of God.

The lifelessness of formalism.—The artist may mould matter into forms of enrapturing beauty, and make us feel their elevating and purifying influences; but what is the marble Moses of a Michael Angelo, or the cold statue of his living Christ, compared to the embodiment of the Hebrew law and the spirit of Jesus in the sculpture of a holy life? What are all the forms of moral beauty in the Pharisee of religion, compared with the true and holy life of the heart of the devoted Christian?[b]

a "It was easier to surprise undefended houses and lands, than to contend with the 5 princes of Phil., and their numerous armies."—*Lange.*

b "The Heb.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

the Danites seek help of God through Micah

1—6. (1) **Danites,** for their lot, *see* Jos. xix. 40—48: comp. Ju. i. 34. **not fallen,** *etc.*, bec. they had not conquered the Amorites and Phil.[a] (2) **five men,** as spies. **Zorah,** Ju. xiii. 25. (3) **knew the voice,**[b] the wanderer might have lived awhile in Dan. (4) **thus,** as ch. xvii. 10. (5) Comp. Ju. i. 1, question suggested by sight of the *ephod*, etc. (6) Very ambiguous answer. **before the Lord,** may be God *approves*, or only God *knows*.

Counsel sought of God (*v.* 5).—I. Why we should ask counsel of God. 1. Because of our ignorance and short-sightedness; 2. It is the course God's people have ever adopted; 3. God alone can give the counsel needed; 4. Our best interests are involved in

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bears the sense, that they heard the voice of the Lev. a little way off, in the chapel, where he was at prayers, and attracted by it they turned aside, and entered the place."—*Spk. Com.*

c Dr. J. Burns.

d Spencer.

He who hath no instructor in the paths of virtue, will never want a master to lead him into vice.

the counsel He can give. II. What kind of counsel we may ask of God. As to—1. Temporal; 2. Relative; 3. Spiritual concerns. III. How must we ask, so as to secure the counsel we need? 1. With a deep conviction of our need; 2. With believing confidence in God; 3. With a resolution to follow the counsel He gives; 4. Through the person and advocacy of Christ.[c]

Seeking Divine guidance.—The Israelites usually asked counsel of God by the Ephod, the Grecians by their Oracles, the Persians by their Magi, the Egyptians by their Hierophante, the Indians by their Gymnosophistæ, the ancient Gauls and Britons by their Druids, the Romans by their Augurs or Soothsayers. It was not lawful to propose any matter of moment in the senate before their wizards had made observations from the heaven or sky. That which they did impiously and superstitiously, we may, nay, we ought to do in another sense, piously, religiously, conscionably; *i.e.* not to embark ourselves into any action of great importance and consequence before we have observed from heaven not the flight of birds, not the houses of planets, or their aspects or conjunctions, but the countenance of God, whether it shineth upon our enterprises or not, whether He approve of our projects and designs or not.[d]

they spy out Laish

a Jos. xix. 47.

b 1 Ki. xxii. 3; 2 Ki. vii. 9.

v. 7. *Bp. Hutchinson. Assize Ser.; F. Peck, Four Disc.* 81.

c M. Henry.

"Better walk on rugged rocks than on slippery ice. If we lose our roll, it is in the Arbour of Ease, not in the Valley of Baca. Few Christians backslide while under the rod; it is usually when on the lap of plenty that believers sin."—*Spurgeon.*

d Dr. Stoughton.

7—10. (7) **Laish,** *Leshem.*[a] now Tell-el-Kadi, 4 miles fr. Cæsarea-Philippi, near sources of Jordan. **careless . . secure,** not warlike, interested in trade; they were a Sidonian colony. It was a secluded situation. **no business,** did not interfere with others, or wished to be interfered with. (8) **came,** with a hopeful report. (9) **the land,** the soil rich and productive. **are ye still,**[b] trying to arouse interest. (10) **God,** *etc.*, trusting to oracle of Micah's priest, *v.* 6.

Laish (*vv.* 9, 10).—I. The observations which the spies made upon the city of Laish, and the posture of the inhabitants. It was—1. Ill-governed; 2. Ill-guarded. II. The encouragement which from hence they gave to their countrymen. They represent the place as—1. Desirable; 2. Attainable.[c]

The greatest danger.—When a city is compact round about with a wall that is impregnable, it will yet be open still towards heaven, and therefore cannot be out of danger if God be an enemy. For all their walls and bars, God could rain fire and brimstone upon the Sodomites out of heaven. Alexander asked the Scythians what they were most afraid of; thinking they would have said of himself, who was so victorious everywhere. But they answered, scoffingly, they were most afraid lest heaven should fall upon them. We, indeed, need not fear anything but this only, lest the heaven should fall upon us, lest God should be our enemy.[d]

the camp of Dan

a The mod. *Kuriet el 'Aineb* is satisfactorily identified with this place. A poor village with a Latin church. Dr. Thonson believes it identical with Emmaus.

11—13. (11) **appointed,** Heb. girded. (12) **Kirjath-jearim,**[a] Jos. ix. 17. **Mahaneh-dan,** Jn. xiii. 25. (13) **house of Micah,** situate near the route northward.

False dispatch.—False dispatch is one of the most dangerous things to business that can be. It is like that which the physicians call pre-digestion, or hasty digestion, which is sure to fill the body full of crudities and secret seeds of diseases. I knew a wise man had it for a by-word, "Stay a little, that we may make an end the sooner." On the other side, true dispatch is a rich thing; for time is the measure of business, as money is of

wares: and business is bought at a dear hand when there is small dispatch.[b]

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[b] *Ld. Bacon.*

14—17. (14) **houses,** the chapel prob. separate from the dwelling, and a cluster of houses may have gathered round it, *v.* 22. **ephod,** proper priest's vestment.[a] (15) **saluted him,** approaching in friendly way. (16) Immediately to protect the thieves. (17) **the priest stood,** *etc.*, while his attention was engaged the gods were stolen; on the appearance of the 5 men with the stolen goods, the convers. took place.

the spies rob the house of Micah

[a] Ex. xxviii. 4—35; 1 Sa. ii. 18, xxii. 18; 2 Sa. vi. 14; 1 Chr. xv. 27.

Moslem superstition.—A leading point in the faith of the Mohammedan is a belief in the Divine origin of the Koran. He believes that the Koran was treasured up in the seventh heaven for all eternity, and was revealed to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel. It was written by the finger of God. It is a sin and a crime to translate or to print it; and although it has been printed by Moslems in Egypt, the orthodox Moslems of Syria regard the act with abhorrence. They write it, in letters of gold and bright colours, on the cornices and lintels of their rooms, but never along or near the floor. No Moslem will ever carry a copy of the Koran below his waist, or lay it on the floor. It must be laid on the shelf, or on an elevated cushion. They carry it written in elegant manuscript, handsomely bound, and commit large portions of it to memory. If the Moslem approaches idolatry in one respect more than in another, it is in his regard for this book.[b]

"They that are against superstition often run into it of the wrong side. If I wear all colours but black, then I am superstitious in not wearing black."—*Selden.*

[b] *Bibl. Treas.*

18—21. (18) **these,** the five spies who knew their way. (19) **priest unto a tribe,** touching his ambition. (20) **glad,** self-interest was his ruling passion. He forgot his obligations to Micah. (21) **little ones,** wives and children, indic. their intention to settle. **carriage,** baggage. **before them,** expecting pursuit.

the Levite becomes priest of the Danites

"Hold thy peace" (*v.*19), *see* Job. xxi. 5, xxix. 9, xl. 4; Pr. xxx. 32; Mic. vii. 16.

"He who seldom speaks, and with one calm well-timed word can strike dumb the loquacious, is a genius or a hero."—*Lavater.*

"Apt words have power to 'suage the tumults of a troubled mind, and are as balm to fester'd wounds."—*Milton.*

Carriage (*v.* 21).—There are passages in the Bible where the word "carriage" is evidently used as synonymous with baggage. For example, Ju. xviii. 21; 1 Sa. xvii. 22. David's "carriage" consisted, as we learn from the preceding verses, of an epha of parched corn, ten loaves of bread, and ten cheeses. Examples of a similar character may readily be cited from the historians and essayists who were contemporaneous with the translators of the Bible. North, in his translation of Plutarch, says that "Spartacus withdrew an opposing army, and took all their carriage;" and Bacon, quoting 1 Sa. xxx. 24, speaks of those "who stayed with the carriages," substituting the word "carriages" for "stuff," which appears in the ordinary version. In fact, "carriage," "luggage," and "baggage," were not only formed in the same way, but were originally synonyms; baggage being that which is bagged, luggage that which is lugged, and carriage that which is carried.

22—26. (22) **good way,** theft not instantly discovered. **houses near,** prob. all in one court, for mutual protection. (23) **cried,** shouted after. **aileth thee,** putting bold face on it. (24) **my gods,** *etc.*, convicting himself of folly and idolatry. (25) Taking insolent advantage of their superior strength. **angry,** chafed in their minds; marg. bitter of soul. (26) **went back,**[a] feeling his theft returned on himself.[b]

Micah's complaint

[a] "Loving his life more than his gods."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Ju. xviii. 2.

The loss of gods (*v.* 24).—I. All men have a god. Whatever a man's god be, he deems it the greatest good. But man's ideas of

[c] *Dr. Thomas.*

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"Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance, are the true sources of superstition. Hope, pride, presumption, a warm indignation, together with ignorance, are the true sources of enthusiasm." — *Hume.*

d Cruikshank.

"Some men, like pictures, are fitter for a corner than a full light." —*Seneca.*

Laish destroyed

a Ge. xlix. 13.

b "In many Heb. MSS. the letter *n* is suspended over the *m* and *s*, so as to introduce a correction from Moses to Manasseh."—*Spk. Com., Wordsworth.*

c 1 Sa. iv. 11, v. 1.

"Superstition renders a man a fool, and scepticism makes him mad."—*Fielding.*

a god are very different and conflicting; amongst worldly gods are—lust, riches, men's praise, etc. II. False gods can be taken from their devotees—1. Often in life; 2. Always at death. III. The loss even of a false god will be felt to be a great loss.[c]

False gods exposed (*v.* 24).—Circumstances took place, some years back, which led to the roguery of the principal fetish of the Gold Coast of Africa being exposed. Of the effect of this exposure upon many of the deluded worshippers, we read:—"One venerable chief, pointing to his long white beard, said, 'This teaches me that I am too old to learn; but it ought to give weight to the advice which I now give to all who are young, to give up their fetish, and go to school.' It was impossible to see their only stay and support thus rudely shattered to pieces without a feeling of pity for their desolate condition, bereft of every spiritual trust. Many of them left the castle (where the investigation had been conducted) desolate and downcast, and were heard repeating to each other, 'What can we now do in sickness and distress?' 'Whither can we fly for succour?' 'Our gods have been proved to be no gods.' 'Our priests have deceived us.'"[d]

27–31. (27) **Laish,** *v.* **7.** (28) **deliverer,** fr. whom help might be sought; the land about there thinly populated. **Zidon,**[a] prob. its mother city. **Beth-rehob,** Nu. xiii. 21; Jos. xix. 28. (29) **Dan,** Jos. xix. 47. (30) **son of,** or descendant of. **Gershom,** Ex. ii. 22, xviii. 3. **Manasseh,**[b] should be *Moses.* (31) **all . . Shiloh,** *i.e.* until captivity of the ark in time of Eli.[c]

Idolaters can worship anything (*v.* 31).—At Baitenzorg, a village of Java, Messrs. Tyerman and Bennett observed a street, occupied exclusively by Chinese. They called at several of the houses and noticed an idol in each. In one they observed an engraving of the French emperor, Napoleon, in a gilt frame, before which incense was burning. The old man to whom the picture belonged, in their presence, paid it divine honours, bowing himself in various antic attitudes, and offering a prayer for blessings upon himself and family. When we asked him why he worshipped a European engraving, he replied, "Oh, we worship anything."

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

the story of the Levite

a 2 Ki. iv. 24.

Saurin, Disc. Hist. iv. 100; Bp. Hall, Contemp.

1–4. (1) **those days,** soon after the death of Josh., *see* ch. xx. 28. **sojourning,** wandering. **concubine,** inferior wife, often a slave; this not indic. immorality; woman had rights of a wife. (2) Ran away and left him. **Bethlehem-judah,** ch. xvii. 7. **four,** *etc.*, Heb. may mean, a year and four months. (3) **servant . . asses,** women travelled on asses, escorted by servant.[a] (4) **eat and drink,** this Levite easily attracted to sensual indulgences.

r. 1–3. *L. Sterne, Ss.* iii. 49.

If you ask me which is the real hereditary sin of human nature, do you imagine I shall answer pride or luxury,

The pleasures of sin.—The Persian king gave Themistocles a goodly pension, assigning Magnesia, with the revenue of fifty talents for his bread, Lampsacum for his wine, and Myos for his meat; but all the while he fed high and drunk deep, he was infinitely afflicted and everything went cross to his undertaking,

and he could not bring his ends about to betray his country; and at last he mingled poison with his wine and drank it off, having first entreated his friends to steal for him a private grave in his own country. Such are the pleasures of the most pompous and flattering of sins; their meat and drink are good and pleasant at first, and it is plenteous and criminal; but its employment is base, it is so against a man's interest, and against what is, and ought to be, dearest to him, that he cannot persuade his better parts to consent, but must fight against them and all their arguments.[b]

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or ambition, or egotism? No; I shall say indolence—who can conquer indolence will conquer all the rest.

b Bp. Taylor.

5–8. (5) **comfort,**[a] Heb. strengthen. Man could hardly resist enticements of meat and drink. (6) **be content,** or willing. (7) **urged him,** as *v.* 5. (8) **afternoon,** declining of day.

Until afternoon (*v.* 8).—"Until afternoon." Hebrew, "till the day declined." In this way also do the people of the East speak when the sun has passed the meridian; "I shall not go till the sun decline;" "I must not go till the declining time."[b]

he abides with his father-in-law

a Ge. xviii. 5.

Sin is like a river, which begins in a quiet spring, but ends in a tumultuous sea.

b Roberts.

9–15. (9) **draweth,** *etc.*, Heb. *is weak.* **day . . end,**[a] Heb. *it is pitching* time *of the day.* (10) **Jebus,** Canaanitish name of Jerusalem. (11) **far spent,** almost nightfall; scarcely safe to proceed. (12) **stranger,** shows that Jebus was still in Canaanite hands. **Gibeah,** of Benjamin, now *Tuleil-el-Ful*,[b] 5 m. N. of Jerusalem. **Ramah,** 1 m. further N., now *El-Ram.* (13, 14) Night decided them to stay at Gibeah. (15) **sat . . city,** in the lawless times even hospitality was forgotten.[c]

the inhospitality of Gibeah

a "These partic. given to account for their journey running so far into evening, wh. was the immediate cause of the horrible catastrophe which followed."—*Spk. Com.*

b Robinson.

c Ge. xix. 1, 2. "Provision is the foundation of hospitality, and thrift the fuel of magnificence."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

Punishment of inhospitality (*v.* 15).—Jupiter and Mercury once visited a village, and, disguised in human form, sought entertainment, but in vain, till they came to the thatched cottage of the aged Baucis and Philemon. Before the strangers was spread the best the place afforded, with careful attention. The unwasted wine revealed to them the gods, to whom they would have sacrificed. "This inhospitable village shall pay the penalty of its impiety. You shall be free. Come with us to the top of yonder hill," said the gods. They obeyed, and beheld the country around sink into a lake, while their own house grew into a magnificent temple, in which they served as priests until transformed together.

16–21. (16) **sojourned,** this not being his native place. (17) **wayfaring man,** some one evidently on a journey. (18) **house of the Lord,**[a] at Shiloh, where poss. his duties as a Levite were now calling him. **receiveth,** gathereth, inviteth. (19) He was in good circumstances, and needed only shelter. (20) **peace,** *etc.*, don't trouble. The old man seems to have known the perils of the streets. (21) **washed,** *etc.*, the customary E. refreshment.

the Levite is sheltered by an old man

a "Perhaps the orig words ought rather to be rendered, 'I am one who walk in the house of the Lord.'"—*Wordsworth.*

Hospitality rewarded (*v.* 20).—In the year 1785, a widow woman and her family resided in the city of Diet, in a lonely situation. She had one son and two daughters, and was supported by some property which her husband had left her. One night, a person dressed in uniform, with a musket and broadsword, came to the house and requested lodgings. "I let no lodgings, friend," said the widow; "and, besides, I have no spare bed, unless you sleep with my son, which I think very improper, on account of you being a perfect stranger to us all." The soldier showed a discharge from Diesbach's regiment, which gave him an excel-

v. 17. *J. Barrett, Serr.; J. Grant, Course of Ss.* i. 1.

"If a man be gracious to strangers, it shows that he is a citizen of the world, and his heart is no island, cut off from other island,

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but a continent that joins them."—*Lil. Bacon.*

"There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality which cannot be described, but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease."—*Washington Irving.*

lent character, and a passport from Count Maillebois, Governor of Breda. He was then hospitably entertained, and withdrew to bed. Some hours afterwards, a knocking was heard at the door; and it was almost broken through by some robbers, when the soldier moved softly down stairs, and stopped at the hall-door, and the son, having seized a case of loaded pistols, joined him. Soon afterwards the door was forced in, and two ruffians entered, who were instantly shot. Two associates of the dead men, however, returned the fire, but without effect. The intrepid stranger now rushed forward, and killed one with his bayonet, and the other with his gun—thus preserving the lives of his kind friends. This veteran's name was Adrian de Griés; he was a native of Middleburgh, and was upwards of seventy years old at the time of this exploit.

sons of Belial

a Ge. xxxiv. 7; De. xxii. 21; Ps. liii. 1, etc.

b De. xxi. 14.

"When night darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine."—*Milton.*

Horrible as this whole story reads and incredible as it may appear it is abundantly paralleled by the corruptions of modern times and of some in even Christian lands. Our newspapers prove to us that death by brutal and bestial outrage is not quite a thing of the past. Sodom has perished, yet sodomy lives. The waters that flow over the ruins of the one may well remind us of the death to which the other is doomed.

"In the night, we cannot discern the spots on our own faces; but, when the light appears, we take a glass, and then they show themselves. So it is with the vices hidden in

22–26. (22) **merry, with feasting. sons of Belial,** *see* De. xiii. 13. **old man,** *v.* 16. **bring forth,** as Ge. xix. 4, 5. Conduct indicating deepest moral corruption, and wildest lawlessness. (23) **come . . house,** and therefore had right to protection. **folly,** in Bib. with usual idea of *wickedness.*[a] (24) The man copied the device of Lot. Ge. xix. 8. (25) **the man,** *i.e.* the Levite; sacrificing his wife rather than himself.[b] (26) **fell down,** and died.

Sons of Belial (*v.* 22).—I. The appellation by which they are here distinguished. "Sons of Belial." Belial treated in the Bible as a proper name (De. xiii. 13; 1 Sa. ii. 12, xxv. 17), but incorrectly; means worthlessness, wickedness: from *beli,* without; and *yaal* profit (*Gesenius*). The word Belial is rendered "wicked" in De. xvii. 9. Belial is a New Test. name of the evil one (2 Cor. vi. 15). Compare this signification of the term and application of Belial to Satan with John viii. 38—44. II. The conduct attributed to them is an apt comment on the epithet applied to them. III. Those who in our day conduct themselves in a licentious and profligate way may be appropriately called Sons of Belial.

The sin of adultery.—God had expressly forbidden adultery, and had placed it in the number of those crimes of which the simple fact rendered the offenders accursed. They were not only to be put to death (Le. xx. 10; De. xxii. 22, etc.), but also to perish from among God's people (Le. xix.); that is, they were to be cut off from the synagogue; they could no longer pretend to the promises of the covenant, or the prerogatives of true and faithful Israelities; in a word, they were to be excommunicated and anathematised. The nation therefore could not leave unpunished the crimes of the inhabitants of Gibeah without charging themselves with the crime, and whatever was attached to it. The Levite, by announcing the crime, by declaring the obligation which there lay to punish, and by placing in full view the anathema which they incurred who should refuse to league to contribute to the effectual punishment, did nothing more than he might do, nothing inconsistent with his condition, his rank, his quality, his dignity; he was even obliged to do so by his function of Levite: he explained the text of the law, 2 Esdras viii. 9. There was, properly speaking, no other method than that which he took to specify the greatness of the crime of the inhabitants of Gibeah, and he confined himself to that. The whole nation instantly understood it as a universal anathema, without being informed of the nature of the crime which had

incurred it. Thus it is remarkable that all the tribes expressly assembled at Mizpeh, to know of the Levite what was the matter. He answered, "That the Benjamites of Gibeah had threatened to kill him unless he consented to their infamous passion; that, moreover, they had injured his concubine with so mad and incredible a brutality, that, in short, she had died of it" (Ju. xx. 3–5). Upon this, every one was convinced of the reality of the anathema, and they not only all obliged themselves by oath not to return to their houses without chastising the inhabitants of Gibeah in a manner suitable to the extent and blackness of their crime (ver. 10); but also to treat, in like manner, all those of the nation who should not march with the army of the Lord against the Benjamites of Gibeah (ch. xxi. 5); which was, in fact, executed with regard to the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead, who were all put to the sword, without regard to sex or age (ver. 10). Thus is the anathema sufficiently made out.[c]

27–30. (27) **went out,** apparently not caring to inquire what had become of his wife. **hands ... threshold,** as if she died in agony of entreaty. This may have touched the husband's heart, and stirred purposes of vengeance. (28) **up,** not at first seeing she was dead. **his place,** *v.* 1. (29) **knife,**[a] 1 Sa. xi. 7. (30) **such deed,** a report passed with the pieces, and excited universal horror. This event was long remembered.[b]

The divided body (*v.* 29).—The Levite designed hereby—I. To represent their barbarous usage of his concubine, whom they had better have cut in pieces thus, than use as they did. II. To express his own passionate concern, and thereby to excite the like in them.[c]—*National duty in relation to private wrongs.*—I. In our day, by means of the press, the widest publicity is given to every known atrocity of private life. A man has not to proclaim his own wrongs. II. Evil deeds should be regarded as violations of Divine law and involving all who, by silence, connive at them in the consequences of Divine anger. III. It is a public duty—1. To consider—(1) Of how much evil the corrupt heart is capable; (2) The great need of personal godliness; 2. To take counsel—(1) How to prevent; (2) How to punish such crimes; 3. To speak—(1) The righteous sentence against the illdoer; (2) The earnest prayer to Him who alone can keep us from sin.

A modern illustration.—A similar incident is said to have occurred recently in the tribes near Damascus. An Arab woman having been accused of unchastity by another was killed by her father, who then tore her body open in the presence of the tribe, and found she was innocent. The slanderer was then judged. Her tongue was cut out, and she was hewn into small pieces, which were sent all over the desert.[d]—*The fiery cross.*—"When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross, also Crean Tarigh, or the Cross of Shame, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with

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us: though leprous and deformed, we think ourselves beautiful till illuminated by the Holy Spirit."—*Cawdray.*

c Critica Biblica.

the divided body

a "The single household implement used not like our knives at our meals but for slaughtering and cutting up the animal into joints for eating.'—*Spk. Com.*

b Hos. ix. 9, x. 9.

v. 30. *Dr. R. South, Ss.* v. 55, xii. 147; *Bp. Smalridge Ss.* 131; *T. Fuller, Strange Justice.*

During the late Sepoy revolt the sign or signal was thus curiously transmitted. A chatpatty, or small cake, was passed from village to village, as in the olden time the fiery cross was borne with lightening speed from crag to crag in Scotland. Whoever received this sign, as the head of the village, and sent it on, was considered favourable to the cause.

c M. Henry.

d Dr. Stanley.

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equal dispatch, to the next village: and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man from 16 yrs. old to 60, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this war-like signal. During the civil war of 1745-6, the Fiery Cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours."[e]

"To endeavour to work upon the vulgar with fine sense is like attempting to hew blocks with a razor."—*Pope.*

[e] *Sir W. Scott.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

the Levite seeks advice of Israel

1—7. (1) **Dan . . Beersheba,** prov. expression for all Israel.[a] **Gilead,** so including tribes E. of Jordan. **unto the Lord,** *i.e.* before His tabernacle. **Mizpeh,** not the town E. of Jordan,[b] but in district of Benj. now *Nebi-Samwil.* (2) **chief,** Heb. corner-stones. (3) **heard,** but did not join them. (4—7) Compare ch. xix. 15—29.

[a] 1 Sa. iii. 20; 1 Ki. iv. 25.

[b] Ju. x. 17, xi. 11.

The gathering of Israel (*v.* 1).—Here at Mizpeh was—I. A general congress of the states for counsel: the chief of the people presented themselves to lead and direct in this affair. II. A general rendezvous of the militia for action: all that drew sword and were men of war.[c]

"Ariston said, that neither a bath nor an oration doth any good unless it purify, the one the skin the other the heart. That is good which doth good."—*Venning.*

[c] *M. Henry.*

Men aroused by strange means.—Men in strangest ways are aroused from spiritual stupor. A profane man is brought to conviction by the shocking blasphemy of a comrade. A man attending church and hearing a sermon from the text, "The ox knoweth his owner," etc., goes home unimpressed, but crossing his barnyard an ox comes up, and licks his hand, and he says, "There it is now, The ox 'knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,' but I do not know God." The gardener of the Countess of Huntingdon was convicted of sin by hearing the countess on the opposite side of the wall talk about Jesus. John Hardoak was aroused by a dream, in which he saw the last day and the Judge sitting, and his own name called with terrible emphasis, "John Hardoak, come to judgment!"[d]

[d] *De Witt Talmage.*

the rest of Israel resolves to punish Benjamin

8—11. (8) **all arose,** moved with excitement by the recital, and not remembering to inquire of the Lord. They should have inquired further, and so have learned that only *some* in Gibeah were guilty, and that the Levite had betrayed his wife to save himself. (9) **by lot,** appointing some to execute the intended punishment. (10) **fetch victual,** so enabling the whole force to keep the field. (11) **all Israel,** except Benj.; they took the side of their own city.

"The Thebans in their armies had a band of men they called the holy band, consisting of such only as were joined together in the bonds of love, as would live and die together; these they made

Popular indignation.—I. Excited by a well-adapted form of appeal. All could understand the argument used. II. The appeal was addressed rather to human sympathies than to reason. The masses were taken with this kind of appeal. III. Resulted in complete union to punish evil-doers. IV. But all this was to avert a common danger, *i.e.* danger arising from anger of God.

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The power of union.—Union is power. The most attenuated thread, when sufficiently multiplied, will form the strongest cable. A single drop of water is a weak and powerless thing; but an infinite number of drops united by the force of attraction will form a stream, and many streams combined will form a river; till rivers pour their water into the mighty oceans, whose proud waves, defying the power of man, none can stay but He who formed them. And thus forces, which, acting singly, are utterly impotent, are, when acting in combination, resistless in their energies, mighty in power.[a]

12—17. (12) **sent men,** the law required offer of conditions before besieging a city, De. xx. 10, 12. (13) **deliver,** *etc.*, this a very right and reasonable demand. (14) **but,** shd. be *and.* (15) Comp. numbers given Nu. i. 36, 37, xxvi. 41. (16) **left-handed,**[a] these prob. the men of Gibeah, *v.* 15. **at a hair,** so as to hit a hair.[b] The sling was made of twisted or plaited thongs of leather. (17) Comp. Nu. i. 46, xxvi. 51.

Precision in aim (*v.* 16).—Consider—I. That whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. This is so in the arts of—1. Peace; 2. War. And when we may have been in some sense delivered from corruption; how uniformly we are still directed to something higher, to a greater growth in grace. II. The necessity of exact, and patient, and assiduous care to perfection of whatever kind.[c]

Politics and war.—In politics, as in war, we meet with certain ardent minds which never understand the utility of marches, countermarches, ambuscades, and affairs of outposts, but are always, and under all circumstances, for pitched battles. Such men may be very good soldiers, but they would be very bad captains. The wise general never gives battle but on favourable ground; and until he has found it, he manœuvres, skirmishes, and harasses the enemy. For in politics, as in war, not combat, but victory, is the object to be pursued.[d]

18—21. (18) They appear to have resolved first, and asked counsel afterwards. **house of God,** should be *Bethel.*[a] *Spk. Com.* suggests that the ark was temporarily removed from Shiloh. **first,** obs. they did not ask guidance in their scheme, or a Divine blessing on it. **Judah,** as leading tribe; and as connected with the Levites[b] wandering abroad, and getting into mischief. (19) **encamped,** Ex. xiii. 20; Ju. vi. 4. (20) **in array,** order for fighting. (21) **down to the ground,** prob. indic. effects produced by the slings.

Resolution and advice (*v.* 18).—I. We are reminded by this procedure of Israel of a course not uncommonly pursued by men—that of resolving first, and seeking advice afterwards. It is this, among other things, that renders the giving of advice so difficult. II. We are reminded of the perplexities that sometimes arise from the apparent strength of a cause. Here are so many that all cannot go. III. We are reminded of the duty and advantage of seeking the guidance of God from the first.

Means without God.—Asa was sick but of his feet,—far from the heart; yet because he sought to the physicians, not to God, he escaped not. Hezekiah was sick to die; yet because he trusted to God, not to physicians, he was restored. Means, without God, cannot help: God without means, can, and often

greast account of, and esteemed the strength of their armies. Such a holy band every society of Christians should be."—*J. Trapp.*

a Salter.

Israel's summons to Benjamin

a "Throwing with the left hand, the stones would come on the enemy from an unexpected direction."—*Wordsworth.*

b "This is a region where such a mode of warfare would be cultivated in ancient times and be very effective. The stones for the sling are everywhere at hand, and the country is cut by deep gorges with impracticable banks. . . . No other weapon would carry across these profound depths."—*Thompson.* 1 Ch. xii. 2.

c *Dr. C. Musgrave.*

d *Manin.*

Judah goes first against Benjamin

a *Lange, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg.*

b Ju. xvii. 8, xix. 1.

"There can be no end without means: and God furnishes no means that exempt us from the task and duty of joining our own best endeavours. The original stock, or wild olive-tree of our natural powers, was not given us to be burnt or blighted, but to be grafted on."—*Coleridge.*

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"The means that Heaven yields must be embraced, and not neglected; else, if Heaven would, and we will not, Heaven's offer we refuse." — *Shakespeare.*

c Bp. Hall and J. Bate.

Israel defeated a second time

v. 23. *J. Hunt, Ss.* 129.

Difficulty excites the mind to the dignity which sustains and finally conquers misfortune; and the ordeal refines while it chasteus.

a Bond.

"Affected dispatch is one of the most dangerous things to business that can be. It is like that which physicians call prodigestion, or hasty digestion, which is soon to fill the body full of crudities and secret seeds of diseases. Therefore measure not dispatch by the times of sitting, but by the advancement of the business."— *Lord Bacon.*

Phinehas inquires of the Lord

a "They are no longer self-confident as before." —*Wordsworth.* Jos. viii. 4.

v. 26. *Dr. G. Croft, Ss.* i. 80.

vv. 27, 28. *Dr. J. Lightfoot, Ss., Wks.* vi 274.

v. 28. *Dr. J. Erskine, A Ser.*

b Dr. J. Lightfoot.

doth. I will use good means, not rest in them.*c*—*Means without the Spirit.*—All means which the Church may use for the salvation of man without the Spirit in them are like a body without life; like a locomotive without steam; like a watch without a main-spring; like an organ without air; like nature without the life-giving power of the sun. However beautiful, unique, antiquated, united, extensive, wealthy, intellectual; however patronised and supported by the wise, the great, and the good, if the Spirit is absent from them they will fail to accomplish the end desired.*d*

22–25. (22) They should have made fresh dispositions. (23) **went up,** Bethel being only 5 or 6 miles away, they could go to and fro in the day. (24) **came near,** this time making the attack. (25) **out of Gibeah,** sallying forth under shelter of the slingers.

Defeated but not disheartened.—I. The ground of encouragement in the hour of defeat. That though defeated they had striven for the right. That their defeat was not proof that God disapproved their purpose. II. The course pursued in the time of defeat. They prepared for a fresh conflict. They inquired of the Lord. III. The result of the second battle. Defeat again. God prospers the right conditionally. Israel right in purpose but wrong in method.

Discouragements overcome.—Mr. Disraeli might well have given up after his first speech in the House of Commons: many men would never have opened their lips there again. There is a sublimity in his words, "The day will come when you will be glad to hear me," when we read it by the light of events. Galileo, compelled to appear to come down, did not give up. Still it moves. The great Nonconformist preacher, Robert Hall, broke down in his first attempt to preach; but he did not give up. Mr. Tennyson might have given up, had he been disheartened by the sharp reviews of his earliest volume. George Stephenson might also have given up, when his railway and his locomotive were laughed out of the Parliament Committee. Mr. Thackeray might have given up when the publishers refused to have anything to do with *Vanity Fair.*[a]

26–30. (26) **wept,** *etc.*, they were now thoroughly aroused and anxious. (27) **inquired,** same as express. *v.* 23. (28) **Phinehas,** Ex. vi. 25. (29) **liers in wait,**[a] not only seeking God, but also adopting more skilful plans. Comp. taking of Ai. (30) **children of Is.,** making the same appearance of attack as before.

Israel inquiring of the Lord (*vv.* 27, 28).—It was time to inquire of the Lord. I. What was it they inquired about? II. How did they inquire? 1. By Phinehas; 2. At the ark. III. How inquired he? By Urim and Thummim.[b]

Humiliation improved.—When Robert Hall first appeared to address an audience in public, he discoursed for a few minutes with great propriety and eloquence; and then his ideas all seemed to desert him, and he was forced to cover his face with his hands, and sit down in unutterable confusion. A second attempt was equally successful on the following week. "If this does not humble me," he remarked, on retiring to his room, "the devil must have me." Afterwards it was often remarked that he was

as noted for his humility as for his great eloquence and power in the pulpit.

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31–34. (31) **house of God,** Bethel. **Gibeah in the field,** prob. Geba.[a] (32) **draw them,** so leaving Gibeah exposed to the ambush. (33) **Baal-tamar,** *place of palms,* here the main army of Is. was drawn up. **meadows,** bare, open place.[b] (34) **battle,** going on some distance fr. Gibeah.

Unseen dangers (*v.* 34).—I. Many catastrophes occur to persons and communities from unseen dangers. II. Men who have not been overwhelmed have often been near to danger without knowing it. III. Past successes often encourage a thoughtless disregard of possible peril. "Dangers lurk thick through all the ground," etc. Learn—I. Gratitude is due to God for deliverance from unseen danger. II. Duty of being always prepared. "Be ye also ready," etc.

Dependence on God in danger.—A poor, simple-hearted man from St. Kilda was advancing, for the first time in his life, from his native rock to visit the world; and as he came towards the island of Mull, a world in itself in the estimation of the poor St. Kilda man, the boatmen commenced telling him the wonders he was so soon to see. They asked him about St. Kilda; they questioned him regarding all the peculiarities of that wonderful place, and rallied him not a little on his ignorance of all those great and magnificent things which were to be seen in Mull. He parried them off with great coolness and good humour; at length a person in the boat asked him if he ever heard of God in St. Kilda. Immediately he became grave and collected. "To what land do you belong?" said he; "describe it to me." "I," said the other, "come from a place very different from your barren rock; I come from the land of flood and field, the land of wheat and barley, where Nature spreads her bounty in abundance and luxuriance before us." "Is that," said the St. Kilda man, "the kind of land you come from? Ah, then, you may forget God, but a St. Kilda man never can. Elevated on his rock, suspended over a precipice, tossed on the wild ocean, he never can forget his God—he hangs continually on His arm." All were silent in the boat, and not a word more was asked him regarding his religion.[c]

Baal-tamar

a "It is remarkable that the north road for Jerus. shortly after passing Tuliel-el-Ful, separates into two branches, one running on to Beitin (Bethel) and the other diverging to the right to Jeba (Geba)."—*Smith's Dict. of Bible.*

b "A place cleared of wood." *Gesenius.*

"There is not a place beneath which a believer walks that is free from snares. Behind every tree there is the Indian with his barbed arrow; behind every bush there is the lion seeking to devour; under every piece of grass there lieth the adder." —*Spurgeon.*

c Dr. N. McLeod.

35–40. (35) **the Lord,** hitherto they had been fighting in their own strength. (36) **gave place,** making show of yielding.[a] (37) **drew along,** spread themselves out, with idea of stealthy approach. (38) **sign,** by wh. success of the stratagem might be known. (39) As *v.* 31. (40) **looked behind them,**[b] attracted to do so by the shouts of their foes.

Thankfulness for danger-signals.—If, when the channel is narrow and tortuous, and the rocks are dangerous, and the gale is on the sea, the shipmaster chooses to bring in his ship, and can do it without a pilot, who cares? If, seeing the lights that are kindled along the coast, he says, "I do not need those lights; I can bring my ship in without them," is there any fine for his not looking at the lights? If he can bring his ship in without looking at them, let him do it. But if the night is dark; if the land-marks are all rubbed out; if he is going on to the coast, and he feels, "I would to God that I knew where I was!" and if, as he speaks, there opens up the light, so that he says, "Thank God! I

Benjamin defeated

a Jos. viii. 15, 19.

b Jos. viii. 20.

"A timid person is frightened before a danger, a coward during the time, and a courageous person afterwards." —*Richter.*

"A man's opinion of danger varies at different times in consequence of an irregular tide of animal spirits; and he is ac-

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tuated by considerations which he dares not avow." — *Smollet.*

c *H. W. Beecher.*

the flight of Benjamin

Proverbs about Danger. — Flying from the bull, I fell into the river. — *Spanish.* To shun Charybdis, and strike upon Scylla. — *Latin* A precipice ahead, wolves behind. — *Latin* To be between the devil and the deep sea. — *English.* To be between the hammer and the anvil.—*French.*

a *H. F. Woolrych.*

"That's a valiant flea that dares eat his breakfast on the lip of a lion!" — *Shakespeare.*

know that light—now I know where I am;" and if the light disappears, and he is in doubt whether it was the light that he thought it was, and it flashes again, and he is satisfied that he made no mistake, that he judged rightly, that it was the light, and he brings his ship safely in, has he not reason to thank God for the lighthouse that taught him how to bring himself into the harbour and into safety *l*c

41—44. (41) **amazed,** terrified so as no longer to fight, their case was hopeless. (42) **way of wilderness,** toward Jericho, and the Jordan. **out of the cities,** prob. other cities of the Benjamites. (43) **trode them,** as grapes in wine-press; **with ease,** bec. of the panic wh. had seized them. (44) **men of valour,** soldiers, there was doubtless also destruction of non-combatants.

The sinner's surprise and overthrow (*v.* 41).—This text may well remind us—I. That though often successful the sinner shall at length be overthrown. II. That his defeat shall come from those he has previously conquered. III. That his surprise will be proportionate to his confidence born of previous success. IV. That his final overthrow will leave him no comfort from former victories.

Amazed.—The men of Benjamin were "amazed." Job xxxii. 15: "They were amazed; they answered no more" (*i.e.* Job's three friends). Matt. xix. 25: "When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed." From these examples—coupled with others, as Isa. xiii. 8; Mark ii. 12, xiv. 33; Luke iv. 36, v. 26, ix. 43; Acts ix. 21—it appears that our translators used this verb in our present sense of being "surprised," or "astonished," and also in the stronger one indicative of that stupor which is coupled with intense fear, and which is elsewhere expressed by "dismayed," or "confounded." This verb is obviously connected with the noun "maze," also used as a neuter verb—*see* Chaucer's "Marchantes Tale." In the Old Testament, "amaze" stands for four different Hebrew verbs, all of which express extreme terror and prostration. In the service of the "Solemnisation of Matrimony," we read at the end, "whose daughters ye are as long as ye do dwell, and are not afraid with any amazement." This is taken from 1 Pet. iii. 6, where the Greek word is equally strong with the Hebrew ones before mentioned. "Amaze" is said to be collateral with an old English "may," "amay."a

the rock of Rimmon

a *Wordsworth, Lange, Robinson.*

b The cities of Benj. are put under the ban and burned, like Jericho, and other cities of the enemy." — *Lange.*

"The village Rimmon forms a remarkable object in the landscape; being situated on and around the summit of a conical

45—48. (45) **Rimmon,** mod. *Rummôn,* N.E. of Gibeah; there are caverns near.c **gleaned,** as if going over a field after harvest. **Gidom,** not otherwise mentioned. (46) **all,** vintage and gleaning. (47) **fled,** *etc.,* succeeding in effecting shelter in the caves. (48) **turned again,** from the slaughter of the army to the destruction of the city.b Surely a sad extreme of excited vengeance.

The rock of Rimmon (*v.* 45).—I. Whither shall Benjamin, discomfited, flee: but to the rock Rimmon? The word means, exalted. II. Whither shall man, pursued by his sins or his other enemies flee, but to his exalted Rock—Christ? III. Observe the safety of those who reach the rock.

Sedan after the battle.—All round Sedan nothing but devastation was visible. Melancholy processions of maimed and enfeebled soldiers passed incessantly, from morning to night,

through the ruined villages, seeking shelter and rest in neutral Belgium. Sedan itself was crowded with wounded; so were the houses and churches for miles in all directions. The red cross waved over every place, and the medical and other attendants, male and female, moved gravely about, discharging with admirable devotion their sad but noble duties. The unhappy villagers, whose homes had been burnt or destroyed by shot and shell, were compelled to live in the open fields, with no other covering than what they could fashion out of wicker-work made from the branches of trees. Cavalry horses ran wild about the country, or strayed into the towns and hamlets. A litter of torn uniforms, broken accoutrements, and battered weapons, cumbered the surface of the land; and the dismal heaps of earth, betokening where hundreds of mangled corpses had been buried, gathered thickly in every open space, and by every roadside.[c]

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chalky hill, and visible in all directions. There can be little doubt of its being the identical rock Rimmon, to which the remnant of the Benjamites fled after the slaughter of the tribe at Gibeah."—*Robinson, Bib. Res.* ii. 113, 120.

c Cassell's Hist. of the War.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Israel's oath concerning Benjamin

1—5. (1) **had sworn,** a rash oath in the time of excitement, **ch. xx.** 1, 8—11. Benj. was to be treated as a heathen people. (2) **house of God,** either *Bethel*, or *Shiloh*, *v.* 12. **wept sore,**[a] their repentance as passionate and intense as their sin. (3) **lacking,**[b] the conditions involved the extermination of Benj. (4) **built . . altar,**[c] as special act of devotion, and bec. of great number of the sacrifices. (5) **not up with,** responding to the call against Gibeah. **oath,** another rash oath, taken at the same time.

Israel mourning a lost tribe (*v.* 3).—We observe—I. That here was a greater regard for the integrity of the nation than for the peace of a section. II. That the decimation of a tribe was mourned only as affecting Israel's entirety. III. That we, too, may be careful for the welfare of each section of the Church as necessary to the harmony and completeness of the whole. IV. That the sorrow of Israel on this occasion may well reprove unholy sectarian rejoicing at the diminishing of neighbouring churches.

Effects of schism.—The schisms in the Church of Christ are deeply to be lamented, on many accounts, by those who have any regard for all that is valuable and worth preserving amongst men; and although we are willing to hope and to believe with Paley that the rent has not reached the foundation, yet are these differences (though not in essentials) most particularly to be lamented, because they prevent the full extension of the glorious light of the Gospel throughout the world. These differences among ourselves furnish those whom we would attempt to convert with this plausible, and to them, I fear, unanswerable argument:—With what face can you Christians attempt to make us converts to your faith, when you have not yet decided amongst yourselves what Christianity is? Surely it will be time enough to make proselytes of others, when you yourselves are agreed. For Calvin damns the Pope, and the Pope damns Calvin; and the only thing in which they agree is in damning Socinus; while Socinus, in his turn, laughs at both, and believes neither.[d]

a Ezra iii. 12, 13.

b "The very name of *Israel* comprehends all the twelve tribes; with one of them blotted out, the rest would not be Israel." — *Spk. Com.*

c 1 Ki. viii. 64.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

vv. 2, 3. *Dr T. Leland, Ss.* iii. 137.

"Schism literally signifies a rent, clift, fissure; in its general acceptation it signifies division or separation; but is chiefly used in speaking of separations happening from diversity of opinions among people of the same religion and faith. All separations, however, must not, properly speaking, be considered as schisms." — *C. Buck.*

d C. Colton.

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Israel's sorrow concerning Benjamin

a 1 Sa. xi. 1—11, xxxi. 11—13; 2 Sa. ii. 4—6.

b Robinson.

vv. 7—13. *T. Stephens, 3 Sers.*

"Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience."—*Assembly's Catechism.*

c F. Fuller.

punishment of Jabesh-gilead

a Nu. xxv. 7—11, xxxi. 6, 7.

The Athenian Ionians, according to Herodotus (i. 146), stole Carian women for themselves, and killed their fathers. Hence, he says, the Milesian custom, which did not permit women to eat with their husbands, or to call them by their names.

b Bailey.

consultation concerning Benjamin

"The fate of war is to be exalted in the morning, and low enough at night! There is but one step

6—9. (6) **repented,** rather, felt remorse. (7) **wives,** for restoration of the tribe. This indic. how wholesale and desperate the slaughter had been. (8) **what one,** city, not tribe. **Jabesh-gilead,** now Ed-Deir, on the southern brow of *Wady-Jabes*,[b] 12 miles N. of ford Jabbok. (9) **numbered,** by tribes and cities.

Repenting for others (*v.* 6).—See note above, but—I. The sin of others may well lead us to repentance, because it shows us of what we ourselves are capable. II. Because the consequences of sin to others shows us of what we are exposed to by reason of our own sin. III. Because fraternal feeling will find personal shame in the sin of other members of the house. Learn—(1) A lesson for others in a family; (2) Or in a church, See the case of Job i. 5.

The devil's policy against repentance.—The great policy of the devil is either to enlarge God's mercy above the bounds of the law, or His justice above the bounds of the Gospel; he either presents God's mercy in a false glass, to make sinners presume, or His justice to bring them to despair. Before sin is committed, he tells them it is a trifle, and will easily be pardoned; but when committed, then it is great, too great for pardon: and though he is the father of lies, they give credit to him, and conclude that their sins, their many and great sins, will never be pardoned: whereas mercy is revealed as the sanctuary of the distressed, the balm of the wounded, the refuge of the burdened, the cordial of fainting, the hope of living, the joy and reviving of dying sinners.[c]

10—15. (10) **twelve thousand,** one thousand from each tribe, making it a representative act. They must, however, have made up contingents to represent Benj. and Levi. **smite,** *etc.*, a fierce and wicked expedition, in the spirit of Phinehas.[a] (11) **woman,** *etc.*, *i.e.* married. (12) **virgins,** so suitable for wives. **Shiloh,** to wh. ark seems to have returned. **land of Canaan,** this put bec. Jabesh was E. of Jordan. (13) **call peaceably,** proclaim peace. (14) **came again,** to their cities. (15) **breach,** through their wilful and desperate effort to punish the sin of a few.

The fearful need of war.—

War must be
While men are what they are: while they have bad
Passions to be roused up; while ruled by men;
While all the powers and treasures of a land
Are at the beck of the ambitious crowd;
While injuries can be inflicted, or
Insults be offered; yea, while rights are worth
Maintaining, freedom keeping, or life having,
So long the sword shall shine; so long shall war
Continue, and the need for war remain.[b]

16—18. (16) The spoil from Jabesh left some two hundred men unprovided for. (17) **an inheritance,** possibility of inheritance. (18) **sworn,** bad oaths are better broken. They schemed to accomp. their end without *appearing* to break oath.

War and peace in a church.—Also, being to preach at a town called Rothbury, there was a deadly feud between the inhabitants so that the men of both sides never met at church

without bloodshed; and, therefore, when one party came, the other used to stay away. But Mr. Gilpin being in the pulpit, both parties came to church; one party going into the chancel, and the other into the body of the church, armed with swords and javelins. Mr. Gilpin, though somewhat moved by this uncouth spectacle, yet went on in his sermon; but when their weapons began to make a clashing sound, and the one side drew near to the other, he came down from the pulpit, and, stepping to the ringleaders of either faction, laboured to establish a peace; and when he could not prevail in that, yet he got a promise from them to continue the peace whilst he was in the church, and afterwards, whilst he was in those quarters; and so, going up again, he spent the rest of the time in disgracing that barbarous and bloody custom. At another time, coming to a church in those parts, before the people assembled, and, walking up and down, he spied a glove hanging up in the church; whereupon he inquired of the sexton the meaning of it, who told him that it was a glove of one of the parish, who had hung it up as a challenge to his enemy, with whom he would fight hand to hand, or with any that durst take it down. Mr. Gilpin requested the sexton to take it down, who replied, that he durst not. "Then," said Mr. Gilpin, "bring me a staff, and I will take it down;" which, accordingly, he did, and put it into his bosom; and in his sermon he took occasion to reprove these inhuman challenges, and reproved him in particular that had hung up the glove; showing him that he had taken it down, and that such practices were unbecoming Christians.[a]

19–25. (19) **feast,** one of the three festivals, either passover,[a] feast of tabernacles,[b] or partic. feast peculiar to Shiloh.[c] The minute description of the place was sent to the Benj. that they might arrange stealthy approach. **Lebonah,** *el-Lubban,* 4 m. S. of *Nablous.* (20) **in wait,** hiding till opportunity comes. (21) **dances,**[d] usual accompaniment of festivals, *etc.* (22) **brethren,** who took leading part in marriage negotiations. (23) **repaired,** the damages of the war. (24) **departed,** no further need of assembling. (25) **right,** *etc.,* so wilful, and often *wrong.*

The Benjamite's wickedness (*v.* 25).—I. The obligations we owe to civil government. Where there is no government all manner of iniquities will prevail. But a vigilant and energetic magistracy stems the torrent of iniquity. II. The obligations we owe to the Gospel of Christ. The restraints of civil government are external only: they cannot reach to the thoughts or dispositions of the heart. But the Gospel—1. Establishes a king in Israel; 2. Rectifies the views of all that receive it; 3. Regulates the conduct. Conclusion—We recommend to you—(1) A self-diffident spirit; (2) A cautious judgment; (3) An unreserved submission to the King of Israel.[e]

The work of sin.—Sin wastes and wears out the vigour of soul and body; feeds upon all our time and strength, and exhausts it into the services of lust. Sickness is a chargeable thing; a consumption at once to the person and to the estate. The poor woman in the Gospel which had an issue of blood, "spent all that she had on physicians and was never the better;"—so poor sinners empty all the powers of soul, of body, of time, of estate, everything within their reach, upon their lusts; and are

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from triumph to ruin."—*Napoleon I.*

"If war has its chivalry, and its pageantry, it has also its hideousness and its demoniac woe. Bullets respect not beauty. They tear out the eye, and shatter the jaw, and rend the cheek."—*Abbott.*

"The measure of civilisation in a people is to be found in its wrongfulness of war."—*Hely's.*

Sow the seeds of comfort in the time of prosperity, and you may reap a rich harvest in adverse days.

a Life of B. Gilpin.

the law of the lawless

a Hengstenberg, Keil.

b Wordsworth, Jamieson.

c Lange, Spk.Com

d 2 Sa. vi. 14 Ex. xv. 20; 1 Sa. xviii. 6.

v. 25. *Z. Mudge, Ss.* 59; *J. M. Neale, Lect* 227. "We never so truly hate sin, as when we hate it for its own ugliness and deformity; as we never love God so truly, as when we love Him for His own beauty and excellency. If we calculate aright, as we shall find nothing better than God Himself, for which we should love Him; so neither shall we find anything worse than sin itself, for which

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we should hate it."—*John Smith.*

e C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 19. "'On the east side.' The Hebrew has, 'towards the sunrising.' Does a person ask the way to a place which lies towards the east, he will be told to go to the *rising place*, to the *rising sky*. If to the west, walk for the *departed place, the gone down place*."—*Roberts.*

f Bp. Reynolds.

None have better reason to rejoice than those who have been brought to weep sincerely and penitently over their sins. Their sorrow is like a cloud fringed with golden light, very soon all the cloud will give way to brightness.

g Bp. J. Taylor.

as unsatisfied at last as at the first (Ecc. i. 8). Like a silkworm, which works out his own bowels into such a mass wherein himself is buried, it weareth them out, and sucketh away the radical strength in the service of it, and yet never giveth them over; but as Pharaoh's taskmasters exacted the brick when they had taken away the straw, so lust doth consume and weaken natural strength, in the obedience of it; and yet when nature is exhausted, the strength of lust is as great, and the commands as tyrannous as ever before (Is. lvii. 10; Je. ii. 25). We are to distinguish between the vital force of the faculties, and the activity of lust which sets them on work, that decays and hastens to death; but sin retains its strength and vigour still; nothing kills that but the blood of Christ, and the decay of nature arises out of the strength of sin. The more any man, in any lust whatsoever, makes himself a servant of sin, and the more busy and active he is in that service, the more will it eat into him and consume him; as the hotter the fever is, the sooner is the body wasted and dried up by it.*f*

The power of sympathy.—Every man rejoices twice when he has a partner of his joy; a friend shares my sorrow and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable, and apt to be drunk up by the first revels of the Sirian star; but two torches do not divide but increase the flame; and, though my tears are the sooner dried up, when they run on my friend's checks in the furrows of compassion, yet when my flame hath kindled his lamp, we unite the glories and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God, because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy.*g*

The Period of the Judges.—The moral character of the Israelites, as described in this book, seems to have undergone a sad change. The generation who were contemporaries with Joshua were both courageous and faithful, and free in a great measure from the weakness and obstinacy which had dishonoured their fathers. Their first ardour, however, had somewhat cooled, and more than once they fell into a state of indifference which Joshua found it needful to rebuke. Perhaps the whole territory of Palestine was more than they needed or could usefully occupy. All found it more convenient to make slaves of their subjugated nations than to expel them. This policy was unwise. It was also sinful. The results were soon seen. Another generation arose. Living in the neighbourhood of idolaters, and with idolaters even in their country, the Israelites copied their example, intermarried with them, and became contaminated with their abominations. The grand moral lesson of the whole narrative is given in the latter half of the second chapter. It is just, however, to add that the whole period must not be regarded as an uninterrupted series of idolatries. Some of the disorders mentioned affected only parts of the country, while the rest was in a better state. In addition to the many who, doubtless, remained faithful amidst all these corruptions, St. Paul reminds us of several illustrious examples of courageous fidelity, Heb. xi. 32 (*Dr. Angus*).

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

Introduction.

I. **Title,** RUTH, so called fr. name of that Moabitess whom Boaz married; and who became one of the ancestors of the Messiah (iv. 18—22, i. 4—6). II. **Author.** *Uncertain*; usually believed by the Jews to have been written by Samuel. It could not have been written before his time as the genealogy, in v. 17--22, shows. Some critics ascribe it to Hezekiah, and some also to Ezra. "The author's name (probably Samuel) is concealed, neither is it needful it should be known; for, even as a man that hath a piece of gold that he knows to be weight, and sees it stamped with the king's image, careth not to know the name of that man who minted or coined it; so we, seeing this book to have the superscription of Cæsar, the stamp of the Holy Spirit, need not to be curious to know who was the penman thereof" (*Thomas Fuller*). III. **Date.** It records certain events that happened in the time of the Judges; but at what particular time is unknown. Some say the time of Eli (*Josephus*), of Ehud (*Moldenhawer*), of Shamgar (*Usher*); by others (*Bp. Patrick*) the famine (i. 1) is supposed to have been that of the time of Gideon (Ju. vi. 3—6); while others (*R. Kimchi*) think that Boaz was the same person as Ibzan, the judge. IV. **Scope.** A sequel to the Book of Judges, and an Intro. to the Bks. of Samuel; its object is, plainly to estab. the fact of the descent of David, the progenitor of the Messiah; and, "perhaps, by the adoption of Ruth into the Jewish Church, to intimate the future ingathering of the Gentiles" (*Litton*). "It had been foretold to the Jews that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was *afterwards* further revealed that he should be of the fam. of David; and, therefore, it was necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the hist. of the fam., in that tribe, should be written *before* these prophecies were revealed, to prevent the least suspicion of fraud or design, and thus this bk., these prophecies, and their accomplishment, serve to illus. ea. other" (*Horne*). V. **Characteristics.** This little bk. "consists of only 85 vers.; but these enclose a garden of roses, as fragrant and full of mystic calyxes, as those wh. the mod. traveller still finds blooming and twining ab. the solitary ruins of Israel and Moab, this side the Jordan and beyond. The significance and beauty of the brief narrative cannot be highly enough estimated, whether regard be had to the thought wh. fills it, the historical value wh. marks it, or the pure and charming form in wh. it is set forth" (*Dr. Cassell*).

Synopsis.

(*According to Ayre.*)

Sec. I. Naomi's sojourn in Moab.....i.
Sec. II. Transactions at Bethlehem ii.—iv. 17
Sec. III. The pedigree .....iv. 18—22

The arrangement of the contents by other writers (*as Horne, Angus, etc.*) is so similar that there is no need to insert them here.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

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1—5. (1) **judges ruled,** during time of confusion; precise date cannot be known. **famine,** caused by inroads of enemies as Midianites.[a] **Bethlehem-judah,** Ju. xvii. 7, 8. **Moab,** Ge. xix. 37; De. ii. 9, 10. (2) **Elimelech,** *my God is king.* **Naomi,** or *Noomi, pleasant.* **Mahlon,** *sick.* **Chilion,** *pining:* names reflecting the distress of time of their birth. **Ephrathites,** see old name of Bethlehem.[b] (3) **left,** widowed. (4) **women of Moab,** against the law.[c] **Orpah,** *mane,* or prob. *fawn.* **Ruth,** vision, beauty,[d] or prob. friendship. (5) **left,** bereft.

Marriages and bereavements (*vv.* 3—5).—I. The marriage of the two sons. Were these two young men right in marrying heathen women? We think not. From this part we remark—1. That mixed marriages are eminently inexpedient and very dangerous; 2. That many wed hoping to produce a change; 3. That no wise person should marry without the advice or consent of parents. II. Their death: "and Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them."[e]—*Family trials.*—I. Heavy sorrows. Tell Naomi's tale. Nearly heartbroken. Husband gone. Sons gone. In a foreign land. No grandchildren to protect her, or urge her rights of inheritance. Sometimes still one sorrow comes after another. Comp. Job i., and show children how tender and loving they should be toward those who have passed through many deep sorrows. II. Heavy sorrows lightened by love and devotion. These just the things Naomi needed. Something to break the sad sense of loneliness and desolation. Comp. Jesus forsaken at Gethsemane. Show greatness of Ruth's love, and how much that we hold dear she gave up for Naomi's sake.

Pastoral poetry.—Dr. Franklin, it is said, was once in the company of several ladies of the English nobility, when the conversation turned upon pastoral poetry, in which the ladies took a conspicuous part. After hearing their criticism on various authors, he proposed to read the translation of a pastoral for their amusement. He read, with a few verbal alterations, the book of Ruth. They were enraptured with the pastoral, and pronounced it the finest they had ever seen in any language. The doctor then gravely told them that he had read it from the Bible!

6—10. (6) **visited,**[a] Ge. xxi. 1. (7) These daughters would hardly have proposed to return with her if they had not become *proselytes* to Judaism. (8) **go, return,** Naomi feels how much they must sacrifice in following her fortunes. (9) **find rest,** obtaining husbands among their own people. (10) **they,** both together.

Naomi leaving Moab (*v.* 7).—Note—I. That there is naturally a love in every one for their own country. See it in Jethro, Ex. xviii. 27, Nu. x. 29, 30; and in Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 27. II. That corporal means cannot keep the truly religious from the place where God is worshipped, if they may enjoy the means of life in a poor measure. Naomi would not stay in Moab, though she in Judah had nothing to maintain her.[b]

Importance of religion to the young.—A friend was press-

the family of Elimelech

[a] Ju. vi. 1—6.

[b] "The Targum Jonathan, and many of the Rabbis, assert that it was in the days of *Ibzan,* of Bethlehem (Ju. xii. 8), whom they suppose to be same as Boaz. Josephus says that this famine was in the days of Eli."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Ge. xxxv. 16—19.

[c] De. vii. 3, xxiii. 3; Ne. xiii. 1—3.

[d] *Gesenius. Bp. Hall, Contemp.; J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 134; *J. Hughes, Ruth and her Kindred. vv.* 1, 2. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Chr.* ii. 24.

[e] "Elimelech seems to have been blamable, in removing from the ordinances and people of God. The famine was not so extreme but others could endure it; and he evidently was a person not likely to want the necessaries of life."—*Scott.*

[e] *W. Braden.*

the return of Naomi

[a] Lu. i. 68.

[b] "There are good natures even among infidels, and such as, in point of civility and moral disposition, cannot be exceeded by the best professors. Who, then, suffers his heart to rest in those qualities, which

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are common to them that are without God."—*Bp. Hall.*

b R. Bernard, M.A.

Orpah returns to her people

a Deut. xxv. 5.

b Wordsworth.

c Perf. of *cleare*, A. S., *clifaw*, *clifan*.

v. 14. *C. E. Kennaway, Ss. to Young* 283; *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 46; *R. W. Dibdin, Ss.* 1.

d J. Bolton.

e R. A. Griffin.

"None ever thirst after God and righteousness but those who in some measure already enjoy the one and possess the other."—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Ruth cleaves to Naomi

a Nu. xxi. 29.

b Comp. 2 Ki. ii. 2–6.

vv. 14–17. *J. Jowett, Lect.* 102.

v. 15. *Dr. T. Fuller, How Far Examples may be Followed*, "*Joseph's Particoloured Coat.*"

c Dr. H. Belfrage.

vv. 15–17. *Bp. Wilson, Ss.* 272.

v. 16. *J. Jenkins, Disc.* ii. 121; *J. Edwards, Wks.* i. 664; *H. W. Sullivan, Ss.* i. 114.

f Dr. J. Ferris.

ing on a young lady of fifteen the importance of thinking of religion . she replied, she would think of it when she was older, and added, "I will enjoy the world while I am young." In vain did her friend remind her of the uncertainty of life; she appeared displeased, and regretted her resolution. But mark the result. In about three weeks afterwards, that friend attended her funeral. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

11—14. (11) **your husbands,** according to Levit. law.[a] (12) **too old,** not perhaps in age, but broken down with many sorrows, past such interests. (13) Lit. *There is more bitterness to me than to you, since the hand of the Lord is gone forth against me;* i.e. you may have husbands and children, I may not.[b] (14) **kissed** with a parting kiss. **clave,**[c] clung to her.

But Ruth clave unto her (*v.* 14).—I. Ruth's call: her call to be a child of God. She was born a heathen. But God had His eye upon her to bring her to Him. II. Ruth's choice: it was unexpected, had to be decided speedily. III. Ruth's crown. Read her history and see how she was blest.[d]—*Orpah and Ruth* (*v.* 14). —I. See in Orpah the portrait of a mere professor. As Orpah behaved to Naomi, even so do many professing Christians behave to Christ and His brethren. 1. She wept; 2. She kissed Naomi; 3. She journeyed *part* of the way; 4. But she did not leave Moab; 5. She went back alone. II. See in Ruth the portrait of a genuine professor. 1. She was resolute in her decision; 2. She entirely left all.[e]

A widow's inquiry in the East.—So said Naomi to the widows of her sons who were following her. When a mother has lost her son, should his widow only come occasionally to see her, the mother will be displeased, and affect to be greatly surprised when she does come. "Do I again see you?" "Is it possible?" "Are there any more sons in my womb?" But the mother-in-law also uses this form of expression when she does not wish to see the widow.

15—18. (15) **her gods,** her return involved giving up the Judaism she seems to have embraced. Chief god of Moab was *Chemosh.*[a] (16) **intreat,**[b] or force me not; be not against me in this. (17) **do so to me,** freq. form of imprecation. (18) **stedfastly-minded,** had really set her heart on it.

Ruth's choice (*vv.* 16, 17).—The choice is—I. Full and unlimited: the God of Israel is her choice, and His people. II. Affectionate. See in Ruth's language all the eagerness and fervour of holy love. III. Determined. IV. Final. It is made for life. V. Made in spite of many discouragements.[c]—*The influence of true affection* (*v.* 16).—In Ruth behold—I. A beautiful illustration of the influence of true affection. 1. She abandons every prospect among her own people; 2. In accompanying Naomi she throws herself upon entire strangers. II. An illustration of the character and feelings of a true convert—of a truly pious person. 1. Her abandonment of former objects of trust and devotion; 2. Her choice of the true God as her portion: 3. Her choosing the people of God as her people; 4. The irrevocable nature of her purpose. III. One of the richest sources of parental joy. IV. An encouragement to pious example and effort.[f]—*A sermon from Ruth* (*vv.* 16, 17).—Gaze on the picture before us.

See Ruth's strong, tender, generous heart crying, "Entreat me not to leave thee." This picture says to us—I. Such constancy is inculcated by the religion of Jesus. II. If a human heart could be thus constant, can we doubt the constancy of God? III. Behold, what stronger constancy is due from us to God. Think of—1. The charms of His person; 2. The value and necessity of His work to us.[g]

Where thou diest I will die.—The dreadful practice of widows burning themselves on the funeral pile with the dead bodies of their husbands, has made the declaration of the text familiar to the native mind. Hence a wife, when her husband is sick, should he be in danger, will say, "Ah! if he die, I also will die; I will go with him; yes, my body, thou also shalt be a corpse." A slave, also, to a good master, makes use of the same language. Husbands sometimes boast of the affection of their wives, and compare them to the eastern stork, which if it lose its mate in the night is said immediately to shriek and die.[h]

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vv. 16, 17. *D. Gibson, Ss.* 55.
vv. 16, 18. *J. Milner, Ss.* iii. 342.

[g] *R. A. Griffin.*

"Death opens the gate of fame, and shuts the gate of envy after it; it unlooses the chain of the captive, and puts the bondsman's task into another man's hand." — *J. Sterne.*

[h] *Roberts.*

Naomi and Ruth arrive at Bethlehem

19—22. (19) **moved,** her return *all alone* excited greatest sympathy with her. (20) **Mara,** *bitter.*[a] (21) **full,** with husband and two sons. **empty,** all three gone, only a relative by marriage her companion. **testified against me,** the sight of her old home renews the bitterness of her grief; these the expressions of an overwhelmed heart. (22) **barley harvest,** beginning of harvesting operations.

The school of adversity (*vv.* 19—21).—Consider the benefit of an afflictive dispensation. I. This is God's mode of carrying on a heavenly education. II. It produces a moral sensibility. III. It produces a light in a dark place. IV. It prepares the mind for prosperity.[b]—*Naomi's return* (*v.* 19).—"Is this Naomi?" Take this question as indicating—I. A joyful recognition. The return of the wanderer should always—1. Excite joy; 2. Produce the utterance of joy: not enough to feel kindly; we must express it. II. A wondering inquiry. Tantamount to, "Can it be Naomi?" See how changed. What sorrow on her once beaming face. Have we not seen such changes? The fairest flower faded? But the greatest subject for wonder and regret is the altered appearance of the returned spiritual wanderer. Moab ever leaves its marks. God heals the wounds of backsliding, but leaves the scars, that they may admonish us and others. III. A thankful surprise. "We have heard of all she has gone through; we never expected she would survive, much less return. Is it Naomi?" Learn from this—1. That God knows best our capacity and strength for affliction. What others expect would undo us, He knows we can bear; 2. That He sustains *in* them all, and brings us back to joy and rest; 3. That He exalts Himself by making us to be the monuments of His sustaining goodness and continued forbearance.[c]

[a] Ex. xv. 23.

v. 19. *C. Simeon, Wks.* iii. 95.

[b] *R. Cecil, M.A.*

"God alone instructeth how to mourn. He doth not trust this higher lesson to voice or hand subordinate. Behold! he cometh forth! O sweet disciple—bow thyself to learn the alphabet of tears." — *Sigourney.*

"Who has not known ill fortune never knew himself, or his own virtue." — *Mallet.*

[c] *R. A. Griffin.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

B.C. 1312.

Ruth gleans in the fields of Boaz

1—3. (1) **kinsman,**[a] lit. *acquaintance,* but meaning a relation, not necessarily a very near one. **Boaz,**[b] = *strength is in him.* The phrase describing him appears to indicate energy and vigour of character, rather then merely wealth. (2) **glean,** Le. xix. 10. Moses commanded that the dropped ears, etc., should be

[a] "The man was not a very near relative, but one

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'known' to the family, as belonging to it. It was an acquaintance valid within the family lines." —*Lange.*

b 1 Ki. vii. 21; 2 Chron. iii. 27.

c Le. xix. 9, 10, xxiii. 22; De. xxiv. 19.

Bo. Hall, Contemp.; J. Saurin, Disc. Hist. iv. 142.

vv. 2, 3. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 68.

e Dr. C. J. Vaughan.

See *Thomson's Seasons*, "Autumn," line 177 *ff.*

"As adversity leads us to think properly of our state, it is most beneficial to us." —*Johnson.*

d R. A. Griffin. "He that is taught to live upon little, owes more to his father's wisdom, than he that has a great deal left him, does to his father's care."—*Penn.*

f Burder.

Boaz visits his harvest men

a Fr., *demoiselle*; It., *damigella.*

b "Rather, 'as to her stay in the house, that is little.'" —*Wordsworth.*

c Lange, Spk. Com.

d Wordsworth.

v. 4. *Dr. J. Boys, Wks.* 26; *Dr. H More, On the Liturgy*, i. 218; *T. Rogers, Lect.* i. 317; *C. Simeon, Wks.* iii. 100.

e B. Dale, M.A.

While Benoro- left for the poor, stranger, and widow.[e] Obs. indic. of Naomi's great need. **grace,** permission to glean. (3) **hap,** or chance: she did not know of Boaz, or seek his field intentionally.

Ruth going to glean (*v.* 2).—I. True affection shows itself in deeds as well as words. 1. Many make a good profession, but neglect to labour; 2. Many will work for Christ if they be very earnestly exhorted. Ruth *requested* to go; 3. Others, when desiring to engage in any particular work, are not careful to inquire of the Lord if it be His will. Ruth would not go however without permission. II. True affection disregards all pride. There was great humility in—1. Her proposition. She would work for their bread, rather than keep up appearances by a proud endurance of poverty; 2. Her expectations. She hopes to gain the recognition and help of Boaz. III. True affection never makes excuses. Ruth might have said—1. Why should I glean? Your kinsman is rich; 2. I have never done so before; 3. Naomi is no real relation of mine; 4. Surely I have sacrificed enough for her already; 5. I would go if she went.[d]—*Faith working* (*v.* 2).—Work is universally God's ordinance for His creatures. I. Nature works. Sometimes in the mere consciousness of health and vitality. 1. Wealth; 2. Want; 3. Covetousness, 4. Ambition; 5. Knowledge; 6. Duty—all work. II. Faith works. And the work of faith looks—1. Within; 2. Upward; 3. Around, 4. Onward.[e]

Gleaning.—The word glean comes from the French *glaner*, to gather ears or grains of corn. This was formerly a general custom in England and Ireland: the poor went into the fields, and collected the straggling ears of corn after the reapers; and it was long supposed that this was their right, and that the law recognised it: but although it has been an old custom, it is now settled by a solemn judgment of the Court of Common Pleas, that a right to glean in the harvest-field cannot be claimed by any person at common law. Any person may permit or prevent it in his own grounds. By certain Acts of Henry VIII., gleaning and leasing are so restricted, as to be, in fact, prohibited in that part of the United Kingdom.[f]

4—7. (4) A visit of inspection. For salutation comp. Ps. cxxix. 7, 8. (5) **servant,** *lit.* young man. **damsel,**[a] young unmarried woman. So Boaz thought. (6) Man's ans. indic. but imperfect knowledge. (7) **let me glean,** as a Moabitess she had asked special permission. **tarried a little,**[b] indic. she wasted no time, so eager did she seem to get food. **house,** shed or booth;[c] or poss. Naomi's house.[d]

Boaz and the reapers (*v.* 4).—I. The presence and blessing of God. 1. The Lord is present in *your* fields, 2. His power, faithfulness, and goodness are still displayed; 3. His providential care is over the affairs of individual men. II. The relation between master and servant. Where this relation is as it should be, they will—1. Think well of each other; 2. Act well towards each other; 3. Speak courteously to each other; 4. Pray for one another. III. Religion among companions in labour. 1. Every one should watch against the influence of ungodly companions; 2. No one should be ashamed of his religion; 3. All should be careful how they speak on religious things.[e]

Gleaning barley.—Travelling on the plains of Bethlehem. I was struck by and equally delighted with the sight of the reapers

in the fields cutting barley, and after every company were women and children gleaning, just as Ruth did when Boaz came to look after his labourers. In the evening may be seen some poor woman or maiden, that has been permitted to glean on her own account, sitting by the roadside, and beating out with a stick or a stone what she has gathered, just as Ruth did. I have often watched this process in various parts of the country. The entire scene might be enacted at the present day by the dwellers in Bethlehem, with but trifling omissions and variations. The salutations that passed between the proprietor and the labourers are no exaggeration of modern politeness. "The Lord be with you," is merely the "Allah m'akum," of ordinary parlance; and so, too, the response, "The Lord bless thee." Again, it is implied that there was a considerable number of reapers, and that the reaping season was prolonged for a considerable time; for it is added in *v.* 23, that Ruth continued until the end of barley harvest, and of wheat harvest, which are quite distinct, occur in the order here stated, and are protracted through several weeks. It is further intimated that the reapers were apt to be rude in their deportment toward defenceless females, and hence the command of Boaz in the 9th verse. Such precautions are not out of place at this day. The reapers are gathered from all parts of the country, and largely from the ruder class, and, living far from home, throw off all restraint, and give free license to their tongues, if nothing more. The meals, too, are quite in keeping, the dipping her morsel in the vinegar, and the parched corn.*f*

8—12. (8) **hearest, or** hast thou not heard. Boaz intends to fix the permission already given. **another field,** as there were no hedges, Ruth might easily miss the land marks. **maidens,** cut the corn; young men bound the sheaves.*a* Close following the reapers, Ruth would glean more. (9) **touch thee,** interfere with, or be rude to thee. (10) **fell,** *etc.*,*b* Eastern attitude of reverence. (11) Boaz made fuller inquiries than we have narrated. (12) **under whose wings,***c* De. xxxii. 11.

The wings of the Almighty (*v.* 12).—I. They were swift wings under which Ruth had come to trust. II. They were very broad wings. They covered up all her wants, all her sorrows, all her sufferings. There is room under those wings for the whole race. III. They were strong wings: mighty to save, mighty to destroy. IV. They were gentle wings. Here stay then; for under these wings is the only safe nest.*d*

The value of kindness.—

Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our misery from our foibles springs:
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And few can save or serve, but all may please;
Oh! let th' ungentle spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
Large bounties to restore, we wish in vain,
But all may shun the guilt of giving pain.
To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
With power to grace them, or to crown with health,
Our little lot denies, but heaven decrees
To all the gift of minist'ring ease;
The mild forbearance at another's fault;
The taunting word, suppress'd as soon as thought;

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lence has a tender heart, compassionate eye, and hands as soft as the down of innocence, she is shod with brass, to spurn at dangers, and trample difficulties under foot.

Men become as strongly attached to others by the benefits they render as by the favours they receive.

f Dr. Thomson.

"He is rich who saves a penny a year; and he poor who runs behind a penny in a year." — *Skelton.*

Boaz speaks kindly to Ruth

a Some think the women *bound sheaves.* Others, as *Robinson,* say the women were only *gleaners.* They would hardly then be called by Boaz, *my maidens.*

b Ge. xxxiii. 3.

c Ps. xvii. 8, xxxvi. 7; Matt. xxiii. 37.

vv. 11, 12. *C. Simeon, Wks.* iii. 102.

v. 12. *Dr. R. Gordon,* ii. 418.

d Dr. Talmage. "Ask the man of adversity how other men *act* towards him; ask those others how he *acts* towards them. Adversity is the true touch-stone of merit in both; happy if it does not produce the dishonesty of meaness in one, and that of insolence and pride in the other."—*Greville.*

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On these Heaven bade the bliss of life depend,
And crush'd ill fortune when it made a friend.[e]

[e] *H. More.*

Boaz protects Ruth

13—17. (13) **friendly,** *to the heart,* in what he had said of her casting in her lot with Naomi. **not like,** *etc.,* being a foreigner. (14) **vinegar,** sour wine mingled with oil. **parched corn,**[a] common food of country. **left,** had some over, see *v.* 18. (15) **among the sheaves,** close up to reapers. **reproach,** Heb. *shame her not.* (16) **of purpose,** on purpose. (17) **beat out,** with a stick, or a stone. **ephah,** six and a quarter gallons nearly.[b] About a bushel,[c] comp. *omer*, Ex. xvi. 16, 18, 22, 36.

And she did eat, and was sufficed (*v.* 14).—When Jesus is the host, none go empty away. He satisfies our head, our heart, our hope, and our desire; He fills our conscience, our judgment, our memory, and our imagination.[d]—*Ruth gleaning* (*v.* 17).—I. The gleaner gathers her portion ear by ear: her gains are little by little. Every ear helps to make a bundle, and every gospel lesson assists in making us wise unto salvation. II. The gleaner keeps her eye open. We must be watchful in religious exercises. III. The gleaner stoops for all she finds: and so must we. A humble heart is a great help towards profiting by the Gospel. A stiff back makes a bad gleaner. IV. What the gleaner gathers she holds: she is as careful to retain as to obtain, and so at last her gains are great.[e]

Treatment of females in the East (*v.* 14).—It is proverbial that the customs of the East have, in most particulars, scarcely changed since patriarchal times; in relation, however, to the practice indicated by the text, a change for the worse seems to have taken place. Lane, in his *Modern Egyptians*, says, "The wives, as well as the female slaves, are not only often debarred from the privilege of eating with the master of the family, but also required to wait upon him when he dines or sups, or even takes his pipe and coffee in the harem. They frequently serve him as menials; fill and light his pipe, make coffee for him, and prepare his food." Mr. Carne mentions, in his *Recollections of the East*, that having been hospitably received in the house of a Syrian family, living in a large town in Syria, and the repast being now ready, "We would fain have shared it with the fair preparers, who had so well received the houseless stranger; but they declined, and stood calmly and silently gazing at the good-will with which their viands were devoured."

[a] "A quantity of the best ears, not too ripe, are plucked with the stalks attached. These are tied into small parcels, a blazing fire is kindled with dry grass and thorn bushes, and the corn-heads are held in it until the chaff is mostly burned off. The grain is thus sufficiently roasted to be eaten." — *Thomson.*

[b] *Conder,* in *Bib Educator.*

[c] *Spk. Com.*

[d] *C. H. Spurgeon.*

[e] *Ibid.*

v. 14. *Dr. Porter* describes a similar scene: "Each group squatted in a circle round a huge bowl of burghul—masters and servants, with equal freedom, tearing off little bits of thin soft bread, and using them as spoons to lift the savoury stew—thus dipping their 'morsels' or 'sops' into the dish."

Ruth confides in, and is advised by Naomi

18—23. (18) **reserved, of** her share of the bread and parched corn. (19) **where,** *etc.,* Naomi was surprised at her success. (20) **near of kin,** Naomi may not yet have learned that Boaz was alive; as soon as she heard his name, hope sprung up in her. He was one who had a "right to redeem." **next kinsman,** *goel,* or redeemer.[a] (21) **all my harvest,** gleanings of wh. would supply the two women for a long time. (22) **meet thee not,** her being found in another field would show slight of Boaz's kindly treatment, and grieve him. (23) **wheat,** a month later.

Naomi's prayer for Boaz (*v.* 20).—From this note—I. That prayer in and by every true member of the Church hath been only made unto God. II. That it is the Lord that doth bless and make happy. III. That the Lord will bless the merciful. IV. That the poor's reward unto the rich for their works of charity is only their prayer to God for them.[b]

[a] "The *goel* had the right of redeeming the inheritance of the person; of marrying the widow; and of avenging the death. (See Le. xxv. 25—31, 47—55; De. xxv. 5—10. xix. 1–13)." *Spk. Com.*

[b] *R. Bernard, M.A.*

The Duke of Northumberland.—The Abbé de Percie, on the commencement of the revolution in France, was obliged to flee from his living in Normandy to this country. Soon after his arrival in London, he was surrounded, in New-street, Coventgarden, and robbed of twenty guineas, which he had received but a few minutes before at Sir Robert Herrie's. With the remainder of his little property he went to Bath, where it was soon expended. In this dilemma, his countrymen there reminded him that he was related to the noble English family of the Percys; and, as the Duke of Northumberland was at that time at Bath, they advised him to apply to his Grace for relief. The abbé immediately wrote to the duke, who returned a polite answer, requesting a few days for investigation. In the meantime, his Grace wrote to Lord Harcourt, at whose house the Duc d'Harcourt resided, and inquired whether the Abbé de Percie was of the family of the de Percies of Normandy; and, finding the statement correct, he transmitted to his newly-discovered cousin a gold box, with a bank-note enclosed in it for one thousand pounds, and a general invitation to his table, which was from that day open to him.

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v. 20. *H. Melvill, Lect.* 331; *H. Caddell, Ss.* 172.

"If ever you have look'd on better days; if ever been where bells have knoll'd to church; if ever sat at any good man's feast; if ever from your eyelids wiped a tear, and know what 'tis to pity and be pitied; let gentleness my strong enforcement be." —*Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) **rest,**[a] *resting-place*, ch. i. 9. This suggestion came to Naomi on hearing of Boaz, her kinsman, and the family *goel*, as she supposed. (2) **he winnoweth,**[b] obs. how in those simple times the master shared in the work. The straw was not so much valued as now, the grain threshed out, etc., on the field for convenience of *storing*. **to-night**, for sake of evening breeze. **threshing-floor**, piece of hard, trodden ground, near the fields. (3) **raiment**, her best. (4) **uncover his feet,**[c] lie down at his feet, and claim a kinsman's right to share his coverlet.

Naomi counsels Ruth

a "Marriage was regarded as the natural fulfilment of woman's calling, without wh. her life was helpless, and defenceless, as that of a people without a God." —*Lange.*

b "The grain after threshing was thrown up against the wind with a shovel, or fork."—*Robinson.*

c "Boaz prob. slept upon a mat or skin; Ruth lay crosswise at his feet—a position in wh. Eastern servants frequently sleep in the same chamber or tent, with their master; and if they want a covering, custom allows them that benefit from part of the covering on their master's bed." *Jamieson.*

d R. Bernard.

Marriage a state of rest (*v.* 1).—I. In respect of the mind of all such as desire marriage, and have not the gift of continency. II. For the contentment and delight which one ought to have in the other, and in the blessing of posterity. Learn—Let married parties labour to make it an estate of rest and peace. (1) To love one another entirely; (2) To perform duties of love cheerfully; (3) To bear one another's infirmities patiently; (4) To take their outward estate of God thankfully and contentedly; (5) Pray for one another daily; (6) Each to take his own faults, and not charge the other.[d]

Winnowing at night.—In these regions much of the agricultural labour is performed in the night. The sun is so hot, and so pernicious, that the farmers endeavour, as much as possible, to avoid its power. Hence numbers plough and irrigate their fields and gardens long after the sun has gone down, or before it rises in the morning. The wind is also generally stronger in the night, which might induce Boaz to prefer that season. From the next two verses we learn that he took his supper there, and slept among the barley. Corn, in the East, is not kept in stacks, but, after being reaped, is in a few days threshed on the spot. The threshing-floor is a circle of about forty feet in diameter, and consists generally of clay and cow-dung, without wall or fence. Under these circumstances, it is necessary for some of the people

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J. Saurin. Disc. Hist. iv. 147.
e Roberts.

Ruth's obedience to Naomi

a Ju. xvi. 29, "*took hold of.*"

b Wordsworth.

c Spk. Com.

d Eze. xvi. 8.

"At all the marriages of the modern Jews and Hindoos, one part of the ceremony is for the bridegroom to put a silken or cotton cloak around his bride." — *Jamieson.*

"It is remarked that the modest deportment of real wise men, when contrasted to the assuming air of the young and ignorant, may be compared to the differences of wheat, which while its ear is empty holds up its head proudly, but as soon as it is filled with grain bends modestly down, and withdraws from observation."—*J. Beaumont.*

e Roberts.

the part of a kinsman

a Comp. law in De. xxv. 5—10.

O wives and mothers! be wise before it is too late! Live so as to enjoy every day of your life. Ten years hence, or even to-morrow, to sleep near the corn till all shall have been threshed and taken home.[e]

5—9. (5) **will do,** though prob. strange customs whose purport she did not fully understand. (6) **floor,** *v.* 2. (7) **merry,** with joy of harvest; but not drunken. **end . . corn,** the reapers slept in the field for convenience of nearness, and to protect the grain. (8) **turned himself,**[a] lit. *bent over,*[b] *bent forward,*[c] to see what was touching his feet. (9) **spread,** *etc.,*[d] the Eastern symbol of taking one under protection. **near kinsman,** ch. ii. 1, 20.

The near kinsman (*v.* 9).—I. Christ is our near kinsman—1. By birth: He took our nature; 2. By condescending love: He came to His own; did not disown them; 3. By self-sacrificing grace: loved us to the end; 4. By present thoughtful care: He is the Lord of providence. II. Let the poorest, and most friendless—like the widowed Ruth—learn to trust Him. He will cast the robe of His righteousness over them; as the father, the best robe over the returning prodigal.

Spreading the skirt (*v.* 9).—The prophet Ezekiel, in describing the Jewish Church as an exposed infant, mentions the care of God in bringing her up with great tenderness, and then, at the proper time, marrying her; which is expressed in the same way as the request of Ruth: "I spread my skirt over thee," . . . "and thou becamest mine." Dr. A. Clarke says, "Even to the present day, when a Jew marries a woman, he throws the skirt, or end of his talith, over her, to signify that he has taken her under his protection." I have been delighted at the marriage ceremonies of the Hindoos, to see among them the same interesting custom. The bride is seated on a throne, surrounded by matrons, having on her veil, her gayest robes, and most valuable jewels. After the thäli has been tied round her neck, the bridegroom approaches her with a silken skirt (purchased by himself), and folds it round her several times over the rest of her clothes. A common way of saying he has married her is, "he has given her the *koori*," has spread the skirt over her. There are, however, those who throw a long robe over the shoulders of the bride, instead of putting on the skirt. An angry husband sometimes says to his wife, "Give me back my skirt," meaning, he wishes to have the marriage compact dissolved. So the mother-in-law, should the daughter not treat her respectfully, says, "My son gave this woman the *koori* (skirt) and has made her respectable, but she neglects me." The request of Ruth, therefore, amounted to nothing more than that Boaz should marry her.[e]

10—13. (10) **latter end,** referring to her willingness to accept him as husband,[a] though he was old, and comparing this with her goodness to Naomi. (11) **city,** gate. **virtuous, if** not, he might be released fr. the obligation. (12) **nearer than I,** on whom duty of marrying her rested. (13) **until the morning,** when she might return safely to Naomi.

Ruth the virtuous (*v.* 11).—Observe—I. Ruth's industry. She accompanies Naomi to the land of Israel, but not to live on public charity, or become the humble pensioner of affluent relatives. It is work, not charity, she asks. II. Her humility: willing to engage in any honest work, however humble, she bends like a

reed to the blast. III. Her affection to Naomi: she stays when her sister leaves.[b]

A fortunate suppliant.—In the inclement part of the winter of 1782, a poor girl stood curtseying at the kitchen window of an elderly gentleman, in the environs of the Metropolis, who observing the distressed object, and the severe weather to which she was exposed, ordered her to be taken into the kitchen, to be well warmed and fed. When she was going away, the weather was so stormy, that the gentleman ordered a bed to be made up for her. Next morning, by the master's directions, the servants put her into decent clothing, and she was sent into the parlour, to thank and take leave of her kind benefactor. The gentleman made some inquiries respecting her, and found that she was of a respectable family, with which, in early life, he had some acquaintance; and finding her willing to go to service, agreed to take her into his house. Here, by industry and good behaviour, in a few years, she rose from the office of kitchenmaid to that of housekeeper, when the old gentleman was taken dangerously ill. Her gratitude then redoubled her attentions towards him, and he became so attached to her, that he would not suffer any other person to nurse him. Finding himself grow worse, he made his will; and, with the exception of a few trifling legacies, left her the whole of his property, amounting to several thousand pounds, plate, furniture, etc. She afterwards married a gentleman of fortune.[b]

14—18. (14) **one .. another,** meaning in the first appearance of dawn, before others were about. **he said,** not aloud, but to himself. Sending her away thus early, and with a bundle of grain, to avoid scandal.[a] (15) **also,** with the same intent. **vail,** prob. mantle, or loose cloak; the vail, however, was large, like "a sheet, and it was wrapped round the face and head, concealing all but one eye." **six,** *etc.*, twice as much as her gleaning. (16) **who .. thou,** showing Ruth reached Naomi before daylight; or inquiring what had happened. (17) **empty,** without a gift. (18) **sit still,** wait for further tidings.

A name famous in Israel (*v.* 14).—Boaz—I. An upright man (iv. 1—12). II. A good master (ii. 4). III. A thoughtful benefactor (ii. 5—17). IV. An ancestor of the Messiah.—*An old woman's advice to the young* (*v.* 18).—"Sit still," etc. This good advice to all in like circumstances—I. Such are apt to be impatient: woman's love moves faster than man's. II. Such impatience is apt to hurry one into obtrusiveness. III. Such obtrusiveness is apt to repel the thoughtful suitor. IV. Such thoughtfulness can appreciate modest worth.

Female influence.—A remarkable instance of the influence of the female sex over minds little likely to be swayed by it, occurred in the case of John Banier, an *élève* of the great Gustavus Adolphus, and one of the greatest generals Europe ever produced. This brave man owed much of his glory to his first wife, and tarnished it by his second. While the wife whom he brought from Sweden lived, he was successful in every undertaking; she accompanied him in every campaign, and was always found to console and cheer him in every danger and difficulty, and to urge him onward wherever glory was to be gained. After her death, Banier became smitten with a lovely young German princess, whom he married; this circumstance proved the grave of all his

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row, you may die. Live so that your presence will gladden the lives of your dear ones, more than anything your hands can win for them.

"Thou shalt stand a deity, sweet woman! and be worshipped."—*Ford.*

b Percy Anec.

"A maiden never bold, of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion blushed at itself." — *Shakespeare.*

Naomi advises patience

a "A good heart is no less afraid of a scandal than of a sin."—*Bp. Hall.*

A good woman never grows old. Years may pass over her head, but, if benevolence and virtue dwell in her heart, she is as cheerful as when the spring of life first opened to her view. Who does not respect and love the woman who has passed her days in acts of kindness and mercy—who has been the friend of man and God—whose whole life has been a scene of kindness and love, and a devotion to truth? We repeat, such a woman cannot grow old. She will always be fresh and buoy-

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ant in spirits, and active in humble deeds of mercy and benevolence.

military fame, for she soon rendered him as effeminate as herself; and six weeks after his marriage he died of grief at having tarnished his fame as a general by a gross neglect of his military duties.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Boaz challenges the near kinsman

a Comp. Ge. xviii. 32; Ju. vi. 27; 1 Sa. i. 8; Eccles. vii. 19. Among mod. Jews ten men are necess. to constitute a synagogue.

c Woolrych.

"The expectations of life depend upon diligence; and the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools." — *Confucius.*

"Who makes quick use of the moment, is a genius of prudence."—*Lavater.*

1—5. (1) **gate,** De. xxv. 7. **such an one,** his name purposely not given. (2) **ten men,**[a] necess. to make a lawful assembly. (3) **selleth,** *etc.*, prob. should be *has sold.* Land might be sold, on lease, terminating with next jubilee; but the *goel*, or redeemer of a family, could, by purchase, at any time free the land again.[b] (4) **thought,** resolved. **redeem it,** so fulfil his duty. (5) **buy it,** by marrying Ruth, according to Levirate law.

Ho! such an one! turn aside (*v.* 1).—I. Here is a noticeable blank in history. Curiosity would like to know some names that doubtless for wise reasons the Bible withholds. II. It may be sometimes necessary to record events that are discreditable to the chief actors; and in such cases it may be well to conceal names. III. Too great care about one's worldly interests may occasion loss of that which most concerns one. IV. The faithful, though costly discharge of duty, may lead to true and abiding fame.

To advertise (*v.* 4).—To advertise, is commonly used, especially by the historians of and previous to the Elizabethan period, in the sense of "inform," "advise." Thus in the original letters (Sir H. Ellis), Letter xxxi. (Lord Surrey to King James IV. of Scotland):—"Right highe and mightie Prince, so itt is that latelie I sent unto you, Rouge Crosse, pursevant at Armes, and by him advertised your Grace that I and other, my Sovereigne Lord's subjects, were come to represse and resist your Invasions," etc. Latimer's 5th Serm.—"I advertise thee, therefore, my fellow-subjects, use thy tongue better."[c]

6—8. (6) **mar,** by investing money in what would belong not to himself, but to any son Ruth might have:[a] or he might object to her Moabitish origin.[b] (7) **changing,** transfer of rights fr. one to another. **confirm,** make irrevocable. **plucked**[c] **. . neighbour,** comp. De. xxv. 9, mitigated in this case. (8) **he drew,** *i.e.* Boaz.

Old customs (*v.* 7).—I. They are often quaint and, to us moderns, meaningless; yet may be important relics of the past. II. They should not be contemptuously cast aside, unless they serve to perpetuate the memory of ancient feuds and follies. III. Many old customs are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. IV. Good old customs should be observed both as old—out of respect to ancestors; and good—as useful to ourselves.

Taking off the shoe.—The simple object in taking off the shoe, was to confirm the bargain: it was the testimony or memorial of the compact. In Deuteronomy it is mentioned that the brother of a deceased husband shall marry the widow, but should he refuse, then the widow is to "go up to the gate unto the elders and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother," Then the elders were to call the man, and

the kinsman declines to redeem his right

a Wordsworth.

b Lange.

c "In acknowledgment that he, to whom the shoe was given, might tread on the property as his own, by the same right as he, who gave the shoe, had formerly trodden upon it."—*Wordsworth.*

"New customs, though they be never so ridiculous, nay, let them be unmanly, yet are followed."—*Shakespeare.*

"Custom does often reason

if he persisted in his refusal, the woman was to come forward "and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face; was to answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house." From that time the man was disgraced, and whenever his person or establishment was spoken of, it was contemptuously called "the house of him that hath his shoe loosed." To be spit at in the face is the most degrading ceremony a man can submit to. This was done by the widow to her husband's brother, and she confirmed his ignominy by taking off his shoe. But this taking off the shoe (as we shall hereafter see) may also allude to the death of her husband, whose shoes were taken off and of no further use to him. And as he said, when she had taken off the shoe from her husband's brother's foot, "thus shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house," may mean, he also shall soon follow his brother, and have his shoes taken off his feet in death. When Ramar had to go to reside in the desert for fourteen years, his brother Parathan was very unwilling for him to go; and tried in every possible way, to dissuade him from his purpose. But Ramar persisted in his resolution, having fully made up his mind to take his departure. When the brother, seeing that his entreaties were in vain, said, "Since you are determined to go, promise me faithfully to return." Then Ramar, having made the promise, gave his shoes to Parathan as a confirmation of his vow. Does a priest, a father, or a respectable friend, resolve to go on a pilgrimage to some distant country; some one will perhaps say, "Ah, he will never return, he intends to remain in those holy places." Should he deny it, then they say, "Give us your shoes as a witness of your promise," and having done so, never will he break it. An affectionate widow never parts with her late husband's shoes: they are placed near her when she sleeps, she kisses and puts her head upon them, and nearly every time after bathing she goes to look at them. These, therefore, are the "testimony," the melancholy confirmation of her husband's death.[d]

9—12. (9) **elders,** *v.* 2. **people,** no doubt a crowd gathered. **Chilion's,** his wife, tho' living, by remaining in Moab, had renounced her rights. (10) **my wife,** so this virtually a marriage ceremony. (11) **Lord make,** *etc.*, the marriage blessing. **wh. two,**[a] regarded as the mothers of Israel. **worthily,** virtuously. (12) **Pharez,**[b] comp. Ge. xxxviii.

A public benediction (*vv.* 11, 12).—I. Upon whom it was pronounced. Boaz an upright man. Note the difference between him, and those who are sometimes the objects of public praise. II. What it included. Domestic and material prosperity are desired for him. III. The admonition with which it was accompanied. "Do thou worthily," etc.

Ancient Eastern marriage ceremony.—The marriage ceremony was commonly performed in a garden, or in the open air; the bride was placed under a canopy, supported by four youths, and adorned with jewels according to the rank of the married persons: all the company crying out with joyful acclamations, Blessed be he that cometh. It was anciently the custom, at the conclusion of the ceremony, for the father and mother, and kindred of the woman, to pray for a blessing upon the parties. Bethuel and Laban, and the other members of their family, pro-

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overrule, and only serves for reason to the fool."—*Rochester.* "The custom and fashion of to-day will be the awkwardness and outrage of to-morrow. So arbitrary are these transient laws."—*Dumas.*

"Long and curious speeches are as fit for dispatch as a robe or mantle with a long train is for a race. Prefaces, and passages, and excusations, and other speeches of reference to the person, are great wastes of time; and though they seem to proceed of modesty, they are bravery."—*Bacon.*

"He that gives for gain, profit, or any by-end, destroys the very intent of bounty; for it falls only upon those that do not want."—*Seneca.*

d Roberts.

Boaz marries Ruth

a Ge. xvi. 2, xxx. 3, marg.

b "His house was far more numerous and illustrious than that of his twin brother, Zerah."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 11. *Bar. Parsons, Wed. Ser.* 250.

vv. 11, 12. *S. Literan. Wks.* i. 404.

"Were a man not to marry a second time, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife, he

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pays the highest compliment to the first, by showing that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time."—*Johnson.*

"If you would have the nuptial union last, let virtue be the bond that ties it fast."—*Rowe.*

c Paxton.

Obed

a M. Henry. The most prominent feature in the Sunday-school teacher's character should be his individual possession of Divine grace, and his growing advancement in the Divine life. A high standard of personal piety must be his constant aim, and habitual communion with heaven his highest delight. "We are the nurses of Christ's little ones: if we forbear taking food ourselves, we shall famish them. If we let our love decline, we are not likely to raise theirs.

genealogy of Boaz

a Mat. i. 3, 4; Lu. iii. 33.

b Serarius, Bonfrius, Patrick, Spanheim, etc.

c Lyranus, A. Lapide, Dr. W. H. Mill.

nounced a solemn benediction upon Rebecca before her departure: "And they blessed Rebecca, and said unto her, thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions; and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them." And in times long posterior to the age of Isaac, when Ruth the Moabitess was espoused to Boaz, "All the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem." After the benedictions, the bride is conducted, with great pomp to the house of her husband; this is usually done in the evening; and as the procession moved along, money, sweatmeats, flowers, and other articles, were thrown among the populace, which they caught in cloths made for such occasions, stretched in a particular manner upon frames.[c]

13—17. (13) **a son,** so were the sorrows of the past wiped out. (14) **kinsman,** *goel,* not merely an heir. (15) **loveth thee,** indic. Ruth's continued kindness to Naomi. (16) **nurse,** repaying Ruth's goodness to her child. (17) **born to Naomi,** as living head of the family.

Ruth's happiness.—I. Ruth, a wife. Boaz took her and she became his wife. II. Ruth, a mother: "the Lord gave her conception." III. Ruth still a daughter-in-law, and the same that she always was to Naomi. IV. Ruth hereby brought in among the ancestors of David and Christ, which was the greatest honour.[a]

18—22. (18) **generations,** descendants. This list is imperfect; comp. lists in 1 Chr. ii. 9—12; Mat. i. 3—5. **Hezron,** Ge. xlvi. 12; Nu. xxvi. 21. (19) **Ram,** *Aram.*[a] 1 Chr. ii. 9, 25. **Aminadab,** Ex. vi. 23. (20) **Salmon,** *Salma.* 1 Chr. ii. 11, 51, 54. (21) **Boaz,** whose mother was *Rakab* of Jericho. Matt. i. 5.

Reconcilement of this genealogy with chronology.—Two ways. I. Fr. Exod. to 4th yr. of Solomon = 480 yrs. (1 K. vi. 1, 2). But the wandering = 40 yrs., hence fr. entrance into Canaan 440 yrs. David lived 70 yrs. hence fr. entrance into Canaan to his birth = 366 years. It has been supposed[b] that Boaz was born 42 yrs. aft. entrance into Canaan and lived 102 yrs. bef. he begat Obed; that Obed lived 111 yrs. bef. he begat Jesse: and Jesse 111 yrs. bef. he begat David. Thus are made out the 366 yrs. II. Or acc. to others,[c] some links are omitted in this genealogy—*e.g.* that Boaz was not the son, but great grandson of Salmon and Rahab. All the persons here mentioned in the genealogy are distinguished men; it is not unlikely that some of lesser note may have been omitted. This is done in the geneal. of Saul (1 Sa. ix. 1).

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

otherwise called

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

Introduction.

I. **Title,** SAMUEL, so called bec. the greater part of the 1st Bk. was written by that prophet, called in the LXX. the 1st and 2nd Bks. of Kings, or of the Kingdoms; called in the Vulg. 1st and 2nd Bks. of Kings; called by Jerome, the Bks. of the Kingdoms. In the Heb. MSS. the Bks. of Sam. are represented as one Bk., entitled "The Bk. of Samuel," or "Samuel." An appropriate heading, "since this title not only originated in the fact that the first half (*i.e.* our first Bk.) contains an acc. of the acts of the prophet Sam., but was also intended to indicate that the spirit of Sam. formed the soul of the true Kingdom in Israel, or that the earthly throne of the Israelitish Kingdom of God derived its strength and perpetuity fr. the spirit of the Lord wh. lived in the prophet" (*Delitzsch*). II. **Author.** "The question of authorship is attended with difficulty: but the more prevalent opinion is, that the first 24 caps. were written by Sam., and the rest by the prophets Nath an and Gad, the contemporaries of David." 1 Ch. xxix. 29 (*Litton*). "Sam. could not have been the author of the whole of the two Bks. called aft. his name, bec. his death occurs in cap. xxv. of the 1st Bk.; and the remaining caps. of the 1st and the whole of the 2nd Bk. descr. events wh. occurred aft. Sam.'s death" (*Pinnock*). It is certain that the 1st Bk. of Sam. was written bef. the 1st Bk. of Kings; a circumstance related in the former Bk. being ref. to in the latter, cf. 1 S. ii. 31; 1 K. ii. 27 (*Horne*). III. **Contents.** "The 1st Bk. of Sam. contains the hist. of the Jewish church and polity, fr. the birth of Sam., during the judicature of Eli, to the death of Saul, the first K. of Israel: a period of nearly 80 yrs., fr. A.M. 2869 to 2949. IV. **Scope.** *Twofold.* 1st. To continue the hist. of the Israelites under the two last Judges, Eli and Sam., and their first monarch Saul, and the reason why their form of government was changed fr. an aristocracy to a monarchy; thus affording a strong confirmation of the authenticity of the Pentateuch, in wh. we find that this change had been foretold by Moses, in his prophetic declaration to the assembled nation, a short time bef. his death, and upwards of 400 yrs. bef. the actual institution of the regal government. 2nd. To exhibit the preservation of the Church of God amidst all the vicissitudes of the Israelitish polity; together with signal instances of the Divine mercy towards those who feared Jehovah, and of judgments inflicted upon His enemies" (*Horne*). "The Bks. of Samuel bear distinct evidence of being, to a certain extent, a compilation from earlier sources, though the unity of style shows that they must have been works of the same age, or that the compiler adapted them to the style of the age in which he was writing. The only source actually named is 'The Bk. of Jasher,' *i.e.* 'The Bk. of the Upright,' from which David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, entitled 'The Song of the Bow,' is quoted. If the conjecture that that book was a collection of historical poems be well grounded, it is possible that the other poetical compositions contained in the Bks. of Samuel may have been borrowed from it. But notwithstanding the learning and ingenuity which have been devoted to this book, our knowledge of its contents and character is still too indefinite to allow us to say whether these ancient odes are derived from that, or from other sources. These poems consist of—(1) Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving (1 Sa. xi. 1—10); (2) David's Lament (2 Sa. i. xix. 27); (3) David's Dirge (2 Sa. iii. 33, 34); (4) David's Song of Thanksgiving (2 Sa. xxii.); (5) The Last Words of David (2 Sa. xxiii. 1—7). There is no reasonable doubt that the whole of these are genuine poetical utterances of the persons whose names they bear, and that the occasions of their composition are correctly assigned" (*Canon Venables, M.A.*).

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

PART I.—Judicature of Eli.

Sect. i. Birth of Samuel, etc. ..... i., ii.
Sect. ii. Call of Samuel..... iii.
Sect. iii. Death of Eli ..... iv.

PART II.—Judicature of Samuel.

Sect. i. The Ark ..... v., vi.
Sect. ii. Reformation of worship..... vii.
Sect. iii. Saul anointed, etc..... viii.—xi.
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PART III.—The History of Saul.

Sect. i. Prosperity..... xiii., xiv.
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Sect. iii. David to death of Saul...xvi.—xxviii.
(*a*) David anointed king ..... xvi.
Victory over Goliath ..... xvii.
(*b*) Persecutions by Saul ..... xviii.
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David in Nob and Moab xxi.—xxii. 1—4
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Sect. iv. Last acts of Saul.
(*a*) Witch of Endor ..... xxviii.
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(*d*) Suicide of Saul ..... xxxi.

(*According to Keil and Delitzsch.*)

SECT. I.—Judicial Office of Samuel.

(*a*) The times and doom of Eli..... i., ii.
(*b*) The call of Samuel..... iii.
(*c*) Fulfilment of doom of Eli..... iv.
(*d*) Chastisement of Philistines...v.—vii. 14

SECT. II.—Election to reject. of Saul.

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(*According to Ayre.*)

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Including
i. Saul's advancement and administration till his rejection..... viii.—xv.
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The Theocracy.—Up to the appointment of *Saul*, the Hebrew nation had existed as a people under the immediate government of God upwards of 800 years. From the call of Abram, in 1921 B.C., to the Exodus, in 1491 B.C., are 430 years; and from the Exodus to the anointing of Saul, in 1095 B.C., are nearly 400 years more. The last judge was *Samuel*, who governed the people much to their advantage; till the evil courses of his sons, whom he had taken to assist him, on account of his infirm age, led the people to desire a *King* (1100 B.C.). Samuel, under the guidance of God, complied with their wishes, and, after warning them of the consequences, appointed *Saul* to be their king (1095 B.C.), thus establishing the Hebrew *Monarchy*, after having been under the government of fourteen *Judges* for a period of 348 years (Tomline says 331 years) (*Dr. Pinnock*).

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Elkanah and his wives

a "Ramah in the land of Zuph, among the mountains of Ephraim." — *Ewald.*
b CORD, *Gesenius.*
c 1 Chr. xxiv. 3.

b Lloyd. T. Robinson, Scrip. Cha. Eli.; Bp. Hall, Contemp.; Dr. H. Hunter, Sac. Biog iv. 309.

"There is no better heritage than a good name that a father can bequeath to his children, and there are few influences on society more wholesome than the fame of its worthies. The names of Luther, and Knox, of Hampden and Washington, of Schwartz and Eliot, are still doing good in the world. Nor is there in a family any richer heirloom than the memory of a noble ancestor." —*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

d Burder.

the grief of the childless Hannah

a Ge. xliii. 34.
b "Observe the evil effects of polygamy." — *Wordsworth.*
"Nothing is so glorious in the eyes of mankind, and ornamental to human nature, setting aside the

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **Ramathaim,** dual form of *Ramah,*[a] meaning either the two hills, or the upper and lower city. There were five cities with this name. **Elkanah,** *acquired by God.* **Jersham,** *etc.*, 1 Chr. vi. 26, 27. **Ephrathite,** refers to Elkanah. (2) **Hannah,** *grace, favour.* **Peninnah,** pearl.[b] (3) **yearly,** *lit.* from year to year. **Shiloh,** Jos. xviii. 1. **Eli,** of family of *Ithamar.*[c]

Beauties of children.—

In a child's voice is there not melody?
In a child's eye is there not rapture seen?
And rapture not of passion's revelry;
Calm, though impassioned; durable, though keen!
It is all fresh, like the young spring's first green!
Children seem spirits from above descended,
To whom still cleaves heaven's atmosphere serene;
Their very wildnesses with truth are blended;
Fresh from their skyey mould, they cannot be amended.
Warm and uncalculating, they're more wise—
More sense that ecstasy of theirs denotes—
More of the stuff they have of Paradise,
And more the music of the warbling throats
Of choirs whose anthem round the Eternal floats,
Than all that bards e'er feign'd, or tuneful skill
Has e'er s' nck forth from artificial notes:
Theirs is that language, ignorant of ill,
Born from a perfect harmony of power and will.[b]

The names of women and slaves (*v.* 2).—The names the Eastern people give to women and slaves appear to us to be oftentimes not a little odd; something of the same kind may, however, be remarked in the Scriptures, though they are there more frequently of the devout kind. The author of the *History of Ali Bey* mentions a female, whose name, Laal, signified ruby. One of the wives of Elkanah, the father of the prophet Samuel, seems to have been named in the same way, for such was the meaning of the word Peninnah. The plural word, *peninim,* signifies rubies, or precious stones that are red (Lam. iv. 7). If both these ladies were called by names that in their respective languages signified a ruby, probably both one and the other were so denominated, either from the floridness of their complexion, or, on the contrary, to a ruby tint, for it may be understood either way.[d]

4—8. (4) **portions,** the offerer received back part of his peace-offerings, these he and his friends ate at a social feast. (5) **worthy,** or double portion: Eastern way of showing special favour.[a] (6) **adversary,**[b] rival. (7) Read. *and so she did year by year.* (8) **better,** *etc.*, reminding her of his special tenderness and goodness.

Absence from week-night services.—"Prayer-meeting and lecture as usual on Wednesday evening, in the lecture-room. Dear brethren, I urge you all to attend the weekly meetings. 'Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.'" Some of the "dear brethren" deported themselves in this way: Brother A. thought it looked like rain, and concluded that his family, in-

cluding himself of course, had better remain at home. On Thursday evening it was raining very hard, and the same brother hired a carriage, and took his whole family to the Academy of Music, to hear M. Agassiz lecture on the "Intelligence of the Lobster." Brother B. thought he was too tired to go, so he stayed at home and worked at the sledge he had promised to make for Billy. Sister C. thought the pavements were too slippery. It would be very dangerous for her to venture out. I saw her next morning, going down street to get her old bonnet "done up." She had an old pair of stockings drawn over her shoes. Three-fourths of the members stayed at home. God was at the prayer-meeting. The pastor was there, and God blessed them. The persons who stayed at home were each represented by a vacant seat. God don't bless empty seats.[c]

9—11. (9) **had eaten,** comp. *v.* 7. Evidently Hannah sat down to the feast, but had no heart to eat much. **by a post,** his seat was put at entrance of the inner court. **temple,** tabernacle. (10) **bitterness,** *lit.* bitter of soul. (11) **vowed a vow,**[a] seeking to urge her prayer, by devoting her child wholly to God. *razor,* Nu. vi. 5.

A praying mother (*a S. S. address*).—**I.** A burdened heart: Explain. as far as necessary, what Hannah's trouble was. Having a family was regarded by Jewish women as a sign of God's favour and blessing, so it was a cause of reproach to have no family. In this case the reproach was kept up by the second wife. **II.** The burden rolled on God: We read about "Casting care on God;" "Casting burden on the Lord." How shall we do it? As Hannah did; by fervent, earnest, believing, heart prayer. **III.** A time of waiting for God: Who may not always answer at once. In what spirit should we wait and watch unto prayer? Hannah's spirit of strong and cheerful faith. Quite sure that the Lord does hear prayer, and will be sure to give us the blessing, if it is best; and we do not want to have it if it is not best. **IV.** Waiting-time ending at last in a precious gift: A son; wiping away Hannah's reproach; a better gift than she thought; what Samuel became.

Nazaritism.—Among these views of abstinence may be classed those of Nazaritism. A Nazarite, during the continuance of his vow, durst drink no wine nor strong drink; nor eat of the fruit of the vine, either grapes or raisins; nor come near any dead body; or otherwise wittingly defile himself. He was also obliged to let his hair grow. At the termination of the period of his vow, he had to make certain offerings prescribed by Moses, and what other offerings he had vowed besides; as also to cut off his hair, and burn it on the altar, and then first drink wine again at the offering-feast. These ordinances, however, rather belong to the ceremonial law, than to the Mosaic jurisprudence, of which I here treat. It is only necessary to attend to this further circumstance, that vows of Nazaritism were not an original institution of Moses, but of more ancient, and probably of Egyptian origin; and that, in his laws, he only gives certain injunctions concerning them, partly to establish the ceremonies and laws of such vows, and partly to prevent people from making them to, or letting their hair grow in honour of, any other than the true God. What typical views he may have had in the ceremonies he prescribed, it forms no part of my present subject, in which I

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infinite advantages which arise from it, as a strong, steady, masculine piety; but enthusiasm and superstition are the weaknesses of human reason, that expose us to the scorn and derision of infidels, and sink us even below the beasts that perish." — *Addison.*

[c] *United Presbyterian.*

Hannah's prayer for a son

[a] For length of service required of the Levites, see Nu. viii. 24, 25.

For vows of women, see Nu. xxx. 6—16.

v. 10. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* li. 89. "It frequently happens after the birth of a son, that if the parent be in distress, or the child sick, or that there be any other cause of grief, the mother makes a vow, that no razor shall come upon the child's head for a certain portion of time, and sometimes for all his life (1 Sa. i. 11). If the child recovers, and the cause of grief be removed, and if the vow be but for a time, so that the mother's vow be fulfilled, then she shaves his head at the end of the time prescribed, makes a small entertainment, collects money and other things from her relations and friends, which

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are sent as *nezers* (offering) to the mosque at Kerbelah, and are there consecrated."—*Morier.*

"Against diseases here the strongest fence is the defensive virtue abstinence." — *Herrick.*

"Intemperance is a dangerous companion. It throws people off their guard; betrays them to a great many indecencies, to ruinous passions, to disadvantages in fortune; makes them discover secrets, drive foolish bargains, engage in play, and often to stagger from the tavern to the stews." — *Jeremy Collier.*

b Michaelis.

merely consider the Mosaic laws on the principles of jurisprudence, but rather belongs to theology, to ascertain. But that before the Mosaic law was given there had been Nazarites among the Israelites, is manifest from the following circumstance: the ordinance of Moses concerning the Nazarites, which stands in chap. vi. of Numbers, was given in the second year after the departure from Egypt; but in an earlier law concerning the sabbatical year, which was made in the first year, Moses adopts a figurative expression from Nazaritism, calling the vines, which in that year were not to be pruned, "Nazarites" (Le. xxv. 5). The thing itself must, therefore, have been already in use, and that for a long period; because such figurative expressions, particularly in agriculture, gardening and rural economy, do not succeed to the proper signification even of the most familiar and best-known terms, till after a lapse of many years. The vow of Nazaritism was not necessarily, nor usually, of perpetual endurance; and hence Moses ordained what offerings should be made at its termination or discontinuance. In latter times, it is true, we have, in the case of Samson, an example of a person devoted by his parents to be a Nazarite for life; but even here, Nazaritism was not understood in its whole extent, as prescribed in the Mosaic law; for Samson plainly deviated from it when he attacked and defeated the Philistines, from whose dead bodies a strict Nazarite must have fled, to avoid defilement. Of such perpetual Nazaritism, however, Moses does not at all treat in his laws; and, of course, does not say whether, like other vows, it could have been redeemed, had it proved a hardship to a son to abstain from wine all his life. According to the analogy of the other laws of Moses on this subject, it should have been redeemable.

Eli reproves Hannah

Good Parents.— Abraham (Gen. xviii. 19); Jacob (Gen. xxiii. 32, etc.); Joseph (Gen. xlviii. 13—20); mother of Moses (Ex. ii. 2, 3); Manoah (Jud xiii. 8); Hannah (1 Sam. i. 28); David (2 Sam. xviii. 5, 33); Shunamite (2 Kings iv. 19, 20); Job (c. 5); mother of Lemuel (Prov. xxxi. 1); nobleman (John iv. 49); Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. i. 5).

"Destruction lurks within the poisonous dose, a fatal fever, or a purpled nose."—*Soame Jenyns.*

12—14. (12) **marked,** noticed, watched. (13) **lips moved,** involuntarily, as if framing the prayer she offered. (14) **drunken,** this expression hints at one of the evils of that age.

A praying mother.—Children who are blessed with parents that pray for them should be very thankful, as they are delivered from many evils into which others fall. Augustine, who lived many hundred years ago, and was a very eminent preacher and writer, had a mother who was eminent for piety, and endeavoured to instil into his infant mind the doctrines of Divine truth, recommending what she taught by a holy life. But he was sinful, and was led away by evil companions into great transgressions. His mother continued to pray constantly and earnestly for him. She applied to a good Christian minister to talk with him, who, after much conversation, assured her that her prayers and tears could not be lost. Those prayers were indeed at length heard; the preaching of another minister brought him to a state of seriousness and prayer, and he became a very holy and useful man.—*Hannah's vow.*—Hannah the wife of Elkanah, was barren, but she had an intense desire to be the mother of a "man child," and she went to the "temple of the Lord" to vow, if it were would give her one, that she would "give him unto the Lord all the days of his life: there shall no razor come upon his head." How often do we witness a similar scene. See the afflicted wife prostrate in the dust before the temple of her god: she earnestly entreats the deity to give unto her a

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"male child." "Ah! then will my husband love me—then will my neighbours cease to reproach me. Ah! my God, a male child, a male child—he shall be called by thy name—and sacred shall be his hair."[a]

15–18. (15) **drunk neither,** in such a way as to cause what you have noticed. **poured out,** in passionate entreaties. (16) Belial, De. xiii. 13. (17) **thy petition,** whatever it may be, v. 27. (18) **find grace,** think of me more worthily.

Not to judge by appearances.—

Judge not: the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.
The look, the air, that frets thy sight,
May be a token, that below
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some infernal foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee shuddering on thy face![a]

19–23. (19) **worshipped,** with a par.[b]ng act of devotion. (20) **Samuel,** *heard of God.*[a] (21) **ye**[a]**r sacrifice,** *v.* 3. **vow,** vows,[b] not prob. a special one. Or h[a]ight intend to fulfil that made by Hannah. (22) **not up,** until she could fulfil her vow as she contemplated. **weaned,**[c] at so he might be left. **for ever,** for his whole life. (23) **established his word,** anxious for keeping of the vow.

Saving the children.—A few years ago, a steamer was coming from California. The cry of "Fire, fire!" suddenly thrilled every heart. Every effort was made to stay the flames; but in vain. It soon became evident that the ship must be lost. The only thought now was self-preservation. The burning mass was headed for the shore, which was not far off. A passenger was seen buckling his belt of gold around his waist, ready to plunge into the waves. Just then, a pleading voice arrested him, "Please, sir, can you swim?" A child's blue eyes were piercing into his deepest soul as he looked down upon her. "Yes, child, I can swim." "Well, sir, won't you please to save me?" "I cannot do both," he thought, "I must save the child and lose the gold. But a moment ago, I was anxious for this whole ship's company: now I am doubting whether I shall exchange a human life for paltry gold." Unbuckling the belt he cast it from him, and said, "Yes, little girl, I will try to save you." Stooping down, he bade her clasp her arms around his neck. "Thus, child; not so tight as to choke me. There, hang on now, and I will try to make to the land." The child bowed herself on his broad shoulders, and clung to her deliverer. With a heart thrice strengthened, and an arm thrice nerved, he struck out for the shore. Wave after wave washed over them; but still the brave man held out, and the dear child held on, until a mighty mountain billow swept the sweet treasure from his embrace, and cast him senseless on the bleak rocks. Kind hands ministered to him. Recovering his consciousness, the form of the dear child met his earliest gaze, bending over him with

a Roberts.

Hannah's pious reply

v. 15. *J. N. Pearson, Ss.* iv. 457. "Beware, so long as you live, of judging men by their outward appearance." — *La Fontaine.* "How little do they see what is, who frame their hasty judgments upon that which seems."—*Southey.* "A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain." —*Shakespeare.*

a Proctor.

the birth of Samuel

a Fr., *shama,* to hear, and *El,* God.

b LXX.

c Heb. mothers, as elsewhere in the E., usually suckled their children till the age of two years complete, sometimes till the age of three. The Persians suckle boys two years and two months, and girls two years." — *Spk. Com.*

v. 20. *T. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 166; *J. Williams, O. T. Cha.* 172; *T. S. M. Anderson, Cloud of Wit.* ii. 238.

"They who provide much wealth for their children, but neglect to improve them in virtue, do like those who feed their horses high, but never train them to the manage." — *Socrates.*

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Samuel is brought to Shiloh

more than angel ministrations, and blessing him with mute but eloquent benedictions.

24—28. (24) **three bullocks,** prob. one bullock of three years old.[a] The proportion of flour however better agrees with three bullocks.[b] **wine,** Nu. xxviii. 14. (25) **bullock,** for burnt-offering. (26) **thy soul liveth,** form of oath peculiar to this book, and *Kings*. (27) **petition,** *v.* 11. (28) **lent,** or returned him. **he worshipped,** refer. prob. is to Hannah, *she* worshipped.

The gift and the loan (*v.* 27).—The child Samuel—I. Was asked of the Lord. From the story, observe—1. It must be quite lawful to ask from God things which He has not *expressly* promised in His Word; 2. Children are gifts of God, and very sweet blessings; 3. Let children learn lessons from their names. II. Was lent to the Lord. Remark—1. That we can give to God only what we first receive from Him; 2. We ought to give to God again all we receive from Him; 3. When we ask earthly good, it should be with the view of serving; 4. When God borrows, it is for our advantage.[c]—*Hannah.*—Note—I. The vows which she made in sorrow were conscientiously performed. This indicates—1. The sincerity; 2. The warmth; 3. The self-denying character of her devotions. II. The answer which God vouchsafed to her prayer was returned to Him as an offering. This act—1. Expresses the liveliest sense of her obligation; 2. Requires the exercise of the strongest faith; 3. Indicates right views of God's service. III. The pious aspirations of her heart met with the most gratifying response.[d]—*A mother's prayer.*—A few words about the advantage of possessing a praying mother. Such a mother, with her deep affection and wide knowledge of the ills of life, knows that only God can take care of her child. The time will come when she will die, or her child will be removed from her oversight. See this pious love illustrated by the case of Hannah and Samuel. I. The need of her prayer. 1. The best child has folly in his heart; 2. The times were troublous. II. The subject of her prayer. 1. An only son; 2. A son who had been given in answer to prayer; 3. A son leaving home. III. The scope of her prayer. 1. It was a prayer of dedication: 2. She would have him serve the Lord as long as he lived. IV. The answer of her prayer. "He worshipped the Lord there." Learn—1. Think often of the mother who prays for you and who taught you to pray; 2. You may be more indebted to a mother's prayers than to all other helps to success in life; 3. Try to fulfil your mother's prayers.[e]

A mother an instrument in the hand of God.—Let every mother consider herself as an instrument in the hand of Providence—let her reflect on the immense importance the proper education of one single family may eventually prove; and that, while the fruit of her labours may descend to generations yet unborn, she will herself reap a glorious reward;—let her behold her children rich in intellectual and moral worth, their desires regulated by virtue and religion, their passions under the control of reason, and their hearts in the possession of that "peace which passes understanding,"—let her see them ennobled by that species of superiority which alone commands the reverence of the heart, and enjoying that true dignity which confers the only real distinction;—let her imagine her children bedewing her tomb with

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a LXX.

b Nu. xxviii. 11—13.

vv. 25—28. *T. E. Hankinson, Ss.* 382.

vv. 26, 27. *R. Cecil, Wks.* ii. 473.

vv. 27, 28. *Bp. Andrewes, Post. Lect.* 565.

c *Dr. J. Edmond.*

d *T. H. Hughes.*

e *S. S. Address.*

A young minister, when about to be ordained, stated that at one period of his life he was nearly an infidel. "But," said he, "there was one argument in favour of Christianity which I could never refute,—the consistent conduct of my father."

"Begin the education of the heart not with the cultivation of noble propensities, but with the cutting away of those that are evil. When once the noxious herbs are withered and rooted out, then the more noble plants strong in themselves, will shoot upwards. The virtuous heart, like the body, becomes strong and healthy more by labour than nourishment.—*Richter.*"

"'Tis education forms the common mind: just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."—*Pope.*

tears of filial affection and gratitude, and even in the latest hour blessing her memory as the cause of that happiness which has marked their path on earth, and as the conductor to that hope which sweetens the hour of dissolution.*f*

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f *Miss Hamilton.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

B.C. 1165.

Hannah's song of praise

she extols the knowledge of God

1—3. (1) **prayed,** her words are both a prophecy and a song.*a* **mine horn,** this fig. is first used here ;*b* *see* 2 Sa. xxii. 3. **mouth is enlarged,** for triumph and joy. **thy salvation,** Hannah gloried in her son chiefly as the answer and gift of God. (2) **rock,**[c] applied to God first De. xxxii. 4, etc., "conveys ideas of strength, permanence, immutability, and withal of protection and shelter."[d] (3) **talk,** *etc.*, as in ch. i. 6, 7. **arrogancy,** undue assumption of importance.[e]

The rejoicing of Hannah (*v.* 1).—It may be inferred from the history before us—I. That our allotted trials and troubles are not intended to detain us from the ordinances of the Lord's house. II. That nothing less than the favour of God can truly satisfy the soul.*f*—*Knowledge of God* (*v.* 3).—I. That a perfect knowledge belongs unto God. 1. He hath created all things ; 2. Consider His universal providence ; 3. He is a being infinitely perfect ; 4. He is everywhere present. II. What God's knowledge is, and in what sense knowledge is attributed to Him. III. The objects of God's knowledge. 1. He hath an exact and perfect knowledge of Himself ; 2. He knows all things. IV. The manner of it. 1. Essential and necessary ; 2. Infinite ; 3. Intuitive ; 4. Easy ; 5. Independent ; 6. Clear and perfect ; 7. Infallible ; 8. Immutable ; 9. Eternal.*g*

The horn.—Besides the ring, chains, and bracelets which load the ears, neck, and arms of the Syrian ladies, they wear on the head a hollow horn, made either of silver, or of copper silvered over, according to the wealth of the wearer ; it rises obliquely from their forehead, and is similar in shape to that worn by the other sex. This horn, or tantour, is from fifteen to twenty inches long ; its thickness gradually diminishes, the diameter of the larger extremity being about four inches, and that of the smaller extremity two inches. It is fastened to the forehead by means of straps, one passing under the chin, and another behind the head. The inclination of the horn forms an angle of from twenty to thirty degrees, and over it hangs a drapery of white muslin, with which the wearer may conceal her features at pleasure. Mr. Bruce found the chiefs of Abyssinia wearing this distinction. The horns were about four inches long, made of silver, and in shape somewhat like an extinguisher. Mr. Buckingham, also, travelling in Palestine and Syria, a few years ago, saw females adorned with this remarkable head-dress.

a Comp. songs of women in Ex. xv. 20, 21 ; Ju. v. ; and Lu. i. 46—55.

Ewald thinks it is not the song of Hannah, but composed on some occasion of national deliverance, such as the overthrow of Goliath.

b "Allusion is to wearing of a tin or silver horn on the forehead, on wh. the veil is suspended. Wives *with children* raise it a little higher, and more towards the perpendicular."—*Jamieson.*

c Ps. xviii. 2, 31, 46, xix. 14, xxviii. 1.

d *Spk. Com.*

e Fr. Lat. *ad* = to *rogare*, to ask, so *to demand too much.*

Adn. Dealtry, Song of Hannah, Sers. 208.

v. 2. *W. Wishart, Theologia*, i. 227.

v. 3. *Abp. Tillotson, Ss.* viii. 63.

f *J. Gilpin.*

g *Dr. Whichcot.*

4—7. (4) **bows,** *etc.*,[a] Hannah reaches beyond her own circumstances to use highly poetic and figur. language. (5) **hired,** *etc.*, as *v.* 36, and Eze. xiii. 19. **ceased,** *i.e.* to hunger more. **seven,**[b] not exactly seven, but *many*. (6) **to the grave,** fig. for the lowest conditions of degradation and misery.[c] (7) **maketh rich,** De. viii. 18.

she notes the changes in human life

a Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 24, cxlv. 14 Mi. vii. 8.

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b Ru. iv. 15; Ps. cxiii. 9; Je. xv. 9.

c De. xxxii. 39.

vv. 1—10. *Bp. Horsley. Bibl. Crit.* ii. 430; *W. Richardson. Expos. Disc.* 1; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 431. *v.* 7. *H. B. Wilson, Ss.* 348; *T. Drew, Irish Pulpit*, iii. 251; *Dr. J. Brysdale. Ss.* i. 271; *A. McCaul, Plain Ss.* 1.

d Arnot.

Samuel left in the care of Eli

a "The will of God is the base or column on wh. the earth rests." —*Wordsworth.*

b Gesenius.

c Zec. iv. 6; 2 Co. xii. 9.

v. 9. *T. Horton*, 100 *Ss.* 54; *J. Jowett, Ss.* 267.

d A. Cameron.

The reason why answers to prayer are not oftener immediate is because our faith does not call for an immediate answer. True faith is not surprised at instant answers, nor dismayed if they be delayed. Dan. ix. 20—23, x. 12; Ps. cxiv. 18, 19; Acts iv. 31; Luke xviii. 1—7, xxi. 36; Eph. vi. 18.

"All of us, who are worth anything, spend our manhood in unlearning the follies, or expiating the mistakes, of our youth." —*Shelley.*

Human life and events under the control of God.—I. This passage may be considered as admonitory to the worldly man. We have—1. The might of the powerful broken; 2. The riches of the wealthy dispersed; 3. The health of the strong broken. II. It may be also considered as consolatory to the pious. Learn—1. Not to despise the poor; 2. Not to envy the rich; 3. Whether rich or poor, to trust in and obey the Lord.

The accuracy of Divine judgment (*see v.* 3).—There is a machine in the Bank of England which receives sovereigns, as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining wholesale whether they are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery, by unerring laws, throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to another. That process is a silent but solemn parable for me. Founded, as it is, upon the laws of nature, it affords the most vivid similitude of the certainty which characterises the judgment of the great day. There are no mistakes or partialities to which the light may trust; the only hope lies in being of standard weight before they go in.[d]

8—11. (8) Comp. Ps. cxiii. 7, 8. **pillars,** *etc.*,[a] fig. taken fr. a palace or temple. Foundations.[b] (9) **by strength,** of *self*-reliance, and *self*-effort, as opposed to *trust* in God.[c] (10) **thunder,** ch. vii. 10. **his king,** prophetic of time when there would be a king, or refer. to Messiah. **exalt the horn,** as *v.* 1. (11) **minister,** in way indic. in *v.* 18, sharing in the usual services of the Levites, who waited on the priests.

Strength by the way (*v.* 9).—The way is—I. Rugged: no smooth, level highway, but rough and hilly. II. Intricate: it winds and turns in directions apparently the opposite of that which leads to the heavenly city. III. Dark: were it not for the pillar-cloud the travellers would despair. IV. Dangerous: a land of deserts and of enemies. V. Lonely: the crowds of earth walk in other paths. VI. Sad: through much tribulation they are to enter the kingdom.[d]—*The saints' keeper* (*v.* 9).—I. The Christian as a traveller: three dangers. 1. Wandering; 2. Stumbling; 3. Failing through weakness. II. What God will do for His saints: "keep," etc. 1. Guidance; 2. Preservation from sin; 3. Protection. How He will do this. By—1. Constant watchfulness; 2. Infusion of grace and strength; 3. Sometimes removing the hindrances; 4. Strengthening principles of grace. IV. Why He will do so. Because—1. He has set His love upon them; 2. Their holiness is of great value in His sight; 3. They are very costly objects of affection; 4. He has solemnly engaged to do so.

Maternal pride.—The first day the late Dr. Balmer went with his mother to attend public worship at Jedburgh, having formerly gone with his father, during his lifetime, to Morebattle, was one on which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed. The action sermon, as it is called, was preached from a tent erected on a green adjoining the church. Robert sat before his mother on the grass. She, having never seen his demeanour in the public assembly before, was surprised and somewhat grieved by his apparent restlessness, but took no notice. However, when the services were concluded, and the little band which came from Eckford-moss were returning, and talking by the way of what they had heard, and endeavouring to recall the particulars of the sermons delivered, he was found able to supply much

of what the older people had forgotten. He had several times thus assisted them to the recollection, both of the heads of the discourses and of remarks made in illustration, when an elder who was among them, looking to his mother, said, "Margaret, do you know wha's laddie that is?" She might, no doubt, feel something of maternal pride, as she replied, "The boy is mine."

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"A drunkard is not profitable for any kind of good service."—*Plato.*

12—17. (12) **sons of Belial,** De. xiii. 13. (13) **fleshhook,** to take the portion belonging to the *offerer*, as well as that due to the priest.[a] (14) **all,** not confining themselves to the part appointed for the priest. (15) **burnt the fat,** Le. vii. 23—25, 31, the fat was burnt by the priest, not by the offerer. (16) **presently,** immediately, at least on same day. The priests acted violently, refusing to make any conditions. (17) **men abhorred,** it being connected with such violence, and dishonoured by such attendants.

Indulgent home-life, and its awful destruction (read to end of chap. ii.).—I. The sin it induces. Hophni and Phinehas: 1. Their conduct and character. (1) Audacious (*v* 12); (2) Covetous (*vv.* 13, 14); (3) Despotic (*v.* 16); (4) Adulterous (*v.* 22); (5) They brought contempt upon religion (*v.* 17). 2. The conduct and character of Eli. (1) The method of Eli's reproof: collectively, "ye,"—by interrogation (*v.* 23)—by assertion (*v.* 24)—by argument (*v.* 25); (2) The effect of his reproof. II. The sorrows it entails. 1. God revokes the mandate of Eli's election, and asserts the universal principle of his action (*v.* 30); 2. The punishment predicted. This was—(1) Humiliating (*v.* 31); (2) Irreparable (*v.* 32); (3) Eternal. Lessons:—(1) Parental discipline should be firm as kind; (2) The welfare of the nation and Church depend upon family training; (3) A respect of God the truest way to promotion; (4) The sorrowful termination of even a good man's life; (5). The awful doom of an impious priesthood.[b]

The way to honour (*see v.* 30).—God is the fountain of all honour. It is the height of honour to be honoured by God; all those—and only those—who honour God, God will honour. And God is not only graciously forward, but under engagements to honour them that honour Him. He says, "I will." If God be the fountain of all honour, and if the height of honour be to be honoured by God, and if all those—and only those—who honour God, God will honour, then it must needs follow of itself that it is the shortest way to true honour to honour God.[c]

the godless sons of Eli

a Comp. Le. vii. 31—35; De. xviii. 3.

v. 12. *W. Richardson, Ss.* i. 13.

v. 17. *J. Wesley, Wks.* vii. 174.

Plato, seeing a child do mischief, went and corrected the father for it; and a recent writer truly remarks: Childhood is like the mirror, catching and reflecting images all around it. Evil or idle words uttered by parents may operate upon a young heart like a careless spray of water thrown upon polished steel, staining it with rust which no after scouring can efface.

b J. S. Exell.

c D. Evance (1659).

18—21. (18) **ministered,** prob. doing such things as light the lamps, clean the furniture, play the cymbals, and especially wait on the aged Eli. **linen ephod,** usual dress of priests.[a] (19) **little coat,** Heb. *meil*,[b] Ex. xxviii. 31. **yearly sacrifice,** as ch. i. 3, 7, 21. (20) **lent,** ch. i. 27, 28. (21) **grew,** comp. Lu. . 40, 52.

The child-priest (*v.* 18).—I. Samuel grew before the Lord. In —1. The Lord's sight; 2. The Lord's smile; 3. The Lord's strength. II. Samuel ministered before the Lord. It was not mere outward service he gave. His young heart was right with God. III. Samuel grew in favour with God and men. God loved this child; and showed His love in many ways. Good men, also, loved Samuel. Conclusion:—For all children let me

Samuel ministers to the Lord

a Ex. xxviii. 4—35; Ju. viii. 27, xvii. 5, xviii. 14—20.

b "Worn under the ephod, and appears to have reached the feet. It had a hole for the head, and slits in the sides for the arms to

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come through, but no sleeves. The *meil* was also worn by kings, princes, and nobles." — *Spk. Com.*

c *Dr. J. Edmond.*

Comp. Le. viii. 7.

v. 20. *W. Reading, A.M., Ss.* i. 317; *Dr. Alex. Grant, Ss.* ii. 191.

Hooker used to say, "If I had no other reason and motive for being religious, I should earnestly strive to be so for the sake of my aged mother, that I might requite her care of me, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy."

"Children generally hate to be idle; all the care then is, that their busy humour should be constantly employed in something of use to them."— *Locke.*

Samuel grows in favour with God and man

wish three things. I am anxious that you should—(1) Grow; (2) Work; (3) Be loved.—*Samuel's mother* (*a S. S. Address*).—"Moreover," in addition to her other acts of kindness. Picture Samuel, as the time of the feast drew nigh, watching for the coming of his mother. Her arrival. Happy meeting. The bundle opened. Trying on the new coat. Text reminds us of—I. A mother's thoughtfulness. Hannah thought not only of education and training, but clothes for her boy. In preparing this coat she would have to calculate his year's growth. Had to weave it: would select the softest wool: would seek to please her child. II. A mother's self-denial. Perhaps saving for her son what she needed for herself. Occupying her time thus. Was not compelled by the law to go up to the feast; this binding on men only. Took this long journey for the sake of her boy. Went afoot. Learn—1. To return a mother's love and thoughtful care by obedience and duty; 2. To be careful of clothes that have been provided at so much cost; 3. These clothes wear out; but there is a dress—the robe of salvation—that gets better the longer it is worn. Kind mothers cannot weave it; but they may encourage us to wear it, and show how to put it on; 4. A white robe in heaven for good children.

Maternal heroism.—Many heroic deeds have been done by men, and are worthily recorded in the world's annals; but the heroism of mother's lives—where is the memorial of it? In heaven alone. Yes, doubtless it lives and breathes on earth in many noble lives and deeds, yet, for the most part, unrecognised and unhonoured. There is Luther in the Diet of Worms; but do we think of Luther's mother—of her patient watchings and strivings, prayers and self-denials? Which seems more admirable—the sturdy and strong nature braving earth and hell under the world's gaze, or the weak and gentle nature, in secret denying and subjecting itself, enduring all things, out of weakness becoming strong, wrestling and striving, for love and duty? They say that Luther had a woman's heart because he loved music, flowers, and children; but we know that these things consist with strength, and Luther's words and acts best bespeak the man.

22—26. (22) **assembled at the door,** not the casual worshippers, but women in some way engaged in service of tabernacle.[a] (23) Too mild a way of treating such scandalous sin. (24) **transgress,** or cry out for the wrong done them. (25) **judge him,** and enforcing the appropriate penalty the man may at last get free. **sin . . Lord,** such sin of sacrilege as this of the young priests, no judge among men can settle a penalty for that. **because,** better read, *therefore.* (26) Words applied by Luke to Christ.[b] Samuel is contrasted with young priests.

The sons of Eli (*v.* 25).—See how the text bears on—I. The extent of God's mercy. Here were two men notorious in wickedness. And if these had only hearkened to their father's reproofs they would have been saved. How great then must God's mercy be. II. The vindication of God's justice. These men were entreaty-proof. Even the kindest, gentlest, almost too deferential of remonstrances, they despised. They both defied God's justice and contemned His mercy. Was not God just then in slaying them?[c]

Honouring God (*see also v.* 30).—There was a boy once working

a "Women dedicated to service of the sanctuary."—*Wordsworth,* following *Hengstenberg.* "Engaged either in fasting and prayer, or in woman's work, such as spinning, knitting," etc.—*Spk. Com.* "An institution of holy women of a strictly ascetic order."—*Jamieson.*

b Lu. ii. 52.

c *Hamilius.*

in a factory. His name was Willie. He received only five shillings a week; but that was the principal dependence of his poor mother. He was a good boy, and always went with his mother to church on Sunday. His employer was not a Christian man. He had a short memory. He forgot God. On one occasion he was in a hurry to get some work done, and he gave notice to his hands on Saturday that he wanted them to work all the next day. Willie was very much tried to know what to do. He could not bear to think of breaking the Sabbath. Yet, if he did not go to work, he was afraid he should lose his place, and then what would his poor mother do? At last he resolved to do right, and leave the rest to God. So he went to church, and kept the Sabbath, as God has commanded. The next morning, as he was going into the factory to begin his work, his master met him. "Where were you yesterday, sir?" "I went to church, sir," said Willie. "Then you may go to church again to-day, for I don't want you here," was his reply. Poor Willie felt very miserable. When he thought of his mother he could not help crying. But he thought that would do no good: so he wiped away his tears, and set out to seek for a new situation. He called at several places, but the only answer he received was, "We don't want any boys." At last he called on a gentleman, who asked him why he had left his last place. His ready reply was, "Because I wouldn't work on Sunday, sir." The gentleman was pleased with this; so he engaged him to work, and promised to give him ten shillings a week. So Willie found that God blessed him for keeping the Sabbath.[d]

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vv. 22–24. *C. W. Le Bas, Ss.* iii. 293.

vv. 23–25. *J. Brailsford, Ss.* 57.

v. 25. *Bp. Mant, Ss.* iii. 355; *W. Cleaver, Ss.* 231; *T. Arnold, Ss.* iii. 329; *S. R. Maitland, Pract. Ser.* iii. 161.

"It is the order of God to govern the world with two hands, which are justice and mercy. If you take away one of them, you maim him. It is the condition of human and Divine things, where contraries are ever counterbalanced by contraries."—*Caussen.*

d Dr. R. Newton.

27—30. (27) **man of God,** Ju. xiii. 6, 8, ii. 1, a prophet. (28) **all the offerings,** *etc.*, a bountiful provision, wh. plainly showed the covetousness of Eli's sons. (29) **kick ye,**[a] fig. taken fr. the overfed beast, wh. becomes unmanageable, and refuses to draw. (30) **for ever,**[b] God designs His priesthood to run in *Aaron's* family permanently. Ex. xix. 9. **be it far fr. me,** *lit.* an abomination unto me.

Eli reproved by a man of God

Man's privilege and God's prerogative (*v.* 30).—Introduction: What is implied in honouring another? (1) We give him testimony of our own high estimation by word or deed: (2) By so doing we endeavour to render him more illustrious in the eyes of others. Consider—I. Our privilege. We may honour God! 1. Our facilities for honouring God: all have them. 2. Our obligations. Whom do men delight to honour? Warriors! His holy arm hath gotten us the victory. Philanthropists! He loved us, and gave His Son to redeem us. Legislators! Listen at Sinai. Kings! "Lift up your heads, ye gates." etc. 3. Our encouragements. Angels' voices call to us. The voice of history encourages. The voice of God's own precepts call on us to "honour the Lord." II. God's prerogative. God confers the highest honour, for He is the highest Himself. He honours His faithful servants—1. Abundantly; 2. Constantly; 3. Lastingly; 4. For Christ's sake alone. Through Jesus, honour God; and through Jesus, God will honour you![c]—*The way to the highest honour* (*v.* 30).—I. What it is to honour God. We honour God when—1. Thoughts of Him are sweet to us; 2. His honour is precious in our eyes, and His glory the continual object of desire; 3. We think ourselves honoured by His service; 4. We engage ourselves to the utmost for Him, and yet acknowledge our un-

a De. xxxii. 15.

Sept. renders this passage:—"Why have ye looked upon my offering with a shameless eye?"

b The *for ever* is limited by the continuance of the *anointed kings* of Israel.

c R. A. Griffin.

v. 30. *Dr. Stoughton, Seven Sers.; Bp. Hackett, Ss.* 711; *D. Evance, Ss. by Celeb. Divines,* 327; *Bp. Stillingfleet, Wks.* i. 732; *Dr. J. Barrow, Wks.* i. 81; *Bp. Beveridge, Wks.* vii. 207; *T. Emlyn. Wks.* iii. 351; *Dr. J. Hurd, Ss.* iii. 352; *Dr. J. Jortin. Ss.* ii. 107; *Bp. Horne, Ss.* v.

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155; *A. W. Hare, Ss.* ii. 35; *H. Alford, Ss.* iii. 357.

"As the lips burning with thirst drink of the fresh pure water flowing from the rock, so should the soul thirst after, and drink of, the flowing crystal streams, which proceed from the Infinite Fountain of Life."—*John Bate.*

d Wm. Strong.

"When I was yet a child, no childish play to me was pleasing; all my mind was set serious to learn and know, and thence to do what what might be publicgood: myself I thought born to that end — born to promote all truth and righteous things."—*Milton.*

doom of house of Eli foretold

a Ex. vi. 6; Zec. xi. 17; Lu. ii. 51.

b Marg. reading is, "Thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle." Refer. to loss of ark, etc.

c 1 Ki. ii. 27.

v. 35. *Dr. Gordon,* ii. 442.

v. 36. *F. F. Clark, Ss.* 19.

Alexander Severus, the Roman emperor, would never suffer any office of trust or power to be sold, remarking that he who bought would also sell.

profitableness; 5. We ascribe our successes to Him; 6. We seek only the honour that comes from Him as our reward. II. How God honours them that honour Him. He—1. Gives them honourable employment; 2. Keeps them unblemished in adversity and prosperity; 3. Gives them high esteem in the hearts of the faithful; 4. Honours them when others dishonour them; 5. Gives them a sweet and precious name after death; 6. Honours them in their posterity. III. How men dishonour God. When they—1. Slight Christ's offers; 2. Are content to live without God; 3. Do not fear His displeasnre; 4. Exalt their own will or wisdom against Him; 5. Are unaffected by things which dishonour Him. IV. How God dishonours men. 1. He will not use them in high employments; 2. He will give them up to base lusts; 3. He will cast them out of the hearts and prayers of His people; 4. After this life their names shall rot; 5. He will dishonour their children.[d]

Honouring God.—A few years ago, a publican in one of the midland counties of England became concerned for the welfare of his soul. Having placed his dependence on Jesus Christ, and become His servant, he appeared as a new man before his fellow-creatures. He resolved to take into his house no known wicked men, nor to draw for any one of his customers more than one pint of ale. His peculiarities soon became known, and his principles put to the test. The squire of the parish, and a large company of hunters, went to the house, determined to have more ale than his regulation allowed. The struggle was powerful; the publican was firm, even though the squire threatened not to renew his license, and all declared that they would withdraw their favours. Subsequent reflection, however, convinced them of the propriety of the publican's resolution; they visited his house for refreshment oftener than before, and the good man had another proof of the truth of the Divine promise, "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

31—36. (31) **thine arm,** fig. for strength.[a] **an old man,** a great punishment, as length of days was regarded as a great sign of honour. (32) **see an enemy,**[b] prob. *thy rival*, reference being to the elder branch of Aaron's house. (33) **not cut off,** *i.e.* in early life, shall be so wicked as to bring further disgrace on you. (34) **a sign,** and a beginning of the fulfilment, ch. iv. 11. (35) **faithful priest,** in substitution of the house of Zadok.[c] **mine anointed,** refer. to the *Kings* of Is. or to Messiah. (36) **crouch to him,** Zadok and his descendants in office.

The decadence of the priestly office (*v.* 36).—It is here clearly implied—I. That the office of priest should not be sought for the sake of material emolument. II. That those who seek it for "a piece of silver and a morsel of bread" must have a low view of the nature and dignity of the office. III. That this low view of the office will be associated with great servility: "crouch." IV. Apply this to modern times and Christian Churches.

A faithful priest.—Some years ago, the Rev. Dr. Henry Peckwell stepped into a dissecting room and touched one of the dead bodies, forgetting that he had just before accidentally cut his finger. He became diseased, and the doctors who were called in pronounced the accident fatal. At that time worship was held at the Tabernacle, Moorfields, on a Friday evening. Conscious of his approaching death, the good man ascended the pulpit,

and preached in so powerful a strain as to make many of his audience weep. At the conclusion, he told his hearers that it was his farewell sermon—"not like the ordinary farewell sermons of the world, but more impressive, from the circumstances, than any preached before. My hearers shall long bear it in mind, when this frail earth is mouldering in its kindred dust!" The congregation could not conjecture his meaning, but on the following Sabbath, an unknown preacher ascended the pulpit, and informed them that their pious minister had breathed his last on the preceding evening.

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It was one of the maxims of this monarch that the majesty of the empire was to be supported by virtue, and not by the ostentatious display of wealth or power.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

the call of Samuel

1—4. (1) **child,** Josephus says, then twelve years old. He served God through attending on Eli. **precious,** special communications fr. God were infrequent. **no open vision,**[a] God had withdrawn Himself back fr. sight bec. of national and priestly sins. (2) **wax dim,** not with sleep, but with old age.[b] So Eli needed an attendant like Sam. near him. (3) **lamp,** "the seven-branched candlek., fed with oil every evening."[c] **temple,** word used in this book for the tabernacle, ch. i. 9. (4) **here am I,** usual response to a call.

the first call

The child Samuel (*v.* 1).—Samuel was—I. The child of much prayer. She who prayed for him *to be*, did not fail to pray for him to be *holy*. II. A consecrated child. Given, not only to God, but also to the temple service. III. A converted child: "the Lord was with him." IV. A tempted child. He had contact with Eli's sons. V. An honoured child. Honoured by a vision from God.[d]—*Youth the repository of Divine judgment* (on the whole chapter).—I. Night visions. Night selected for this vision because—1. It was calm and silent; 2. It would lend impressiveness to the call; 3. It was consistent with the event announced; 4. God wished to show that He works at the most unlikely times, independent of external and natural aid. Consider concerning the vision—(1) In what it consisted (*vv.* 4—14). The communications made were astounding, and of wide-spread interest; the doom was inevitable, rendered so by Divine oath, and by a strict refusal of compromise. (2) To whom entrusted: Samuel. Childhood vocal on the lips of God. Devoted childhood honoured by God. (3) How honestly mistaken: "ran unto Eli." This action was prompt, responsive, deferential. Mistaken childhood instructed (*v.* 7). (4) Obediently received (*v.* 10). II. Morning disclosures. The vision was—1. Timidly retained (*vv.* 16, 17); 2. Faithfully disclosed (*v.* 18); 3. Reverently acknowledged (*v.* 18). Lessons:—(1) Childhood taken to the temple as likely to be called by God; (2) The temple the place for the instruction of youth; (3) The punishment of parental indulgence is both certain and fearful; (4) The secrets of Divine providence are ever entrusted to faithful souls; (5) Moral rectitude honoured by God and respected by man (*vv.* 19—21).[e]

God's Word precious.—About three hundred years ago, when Bibles were not cheap, and when persons were not allowed to read them freely as they may now, one evening a little peasant child came tripping down the mountain with her father's goats,

[a] "Prophetic vision not open, extended but contracted on account of sin."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Ge. xxvii. 1.

[c] Ex. xxvii. 20, xxx. 8; Le. xxiv. 2.

"There was no vision promulgated or published."—*Spk. Com.*

[d] *R. A. Griffin.*

"None that were publicly known to have visions." *Mat. Henry.*

v. 1. *Dr. R. Hawker, Wks.* v. 117; *J. Slade, Ss.* i. 276; *C. E. Kennaway, Ss. to Young*, 82.

[e] *J. S. Exell.*

"I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer

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strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written." — *Sir William Jones.*

"Little body with a mighty heart." —*Shakespeare.*

and she saw a stranger, who spoke to her, and said. "I like the hymn you were singing just now, little child." Then he told her he had heard it many hundreds of miles away. Following her to the hut in which she lived he went in, and was welcomed as a stranger; but when he made known to the family that he was a pastor, their joy knew no bounds. It was quickly arranged that a meeting should be held that evening; and the father and son, and even little Lois, the peasant child, hastened from cottage to cottage by the light of torches to beg their neighbours to come. A crowd of old men, rough men, women, and children too, met in the cottage home. And when the good pastor took out his clasped Bible to read, "The Book, the Book!" they murmured, and bowed their heads in reverence to hear the words of life.

the second call

God's Word is like God's world —varied, very rich, very beautiful. You never know when you have exhausted all its secrets. The Bible, like nature, has something for every class of mind. Look at the Bible in a new light, and straightway you see some new charms.

"I will hazard the assertion, that no man ever did or ever will become truly eloquent, without being a constant reader of the Bible, and an admirer of the purity and sublimity of its language." — *Fisher Ames.*

5—7. (5) **ran,** he was prob. sleeping near and within sound of a call. (6) **thou didst,** no idea of his prophetic office seems yet to have dawned on Sam. (7) **know the Lord,** by special and personal *revelations*. Expression does not deny that he had relig. instruction, or personal piety.

Personal knowledge of God (*v.* 7).—I. There may be great religious privileges and much religious instruction without a personal knowledge of God. II. Those who are the subjects of those privileges, etc., are favourably placed for securing this personal knowledge of God. III. In order to personal knowledge the Divine call must be yielded to. IV. Of this call, to know and serve God, we are all the subjects.

How obedience saved.—On one of the railroads of Prussia a pointsman was just taking his place in order to turn a coming train, then in sight, on to a different track, to prevent a collision with a train approaching by a loop line in a contrary direction, when he suddenly discerned his little son playing directly in front of the rapidly advancing engine. What could he do? He might spring to his child and rescue him, but he could not do this and turn the points in time, and for want of that, hundreds of lives might be lost. Although in sore trouble, he could not neglect his greater duty; but crying to his son, "Lie down!" he went to his post. The child, accustomed to obey, did as commanded, and the heavy train thundered over him. Little did the passengers dream, as they found themselves quietly resting on the siding, what terrible anguish their approach had carried to one noble heart. The father rushed forward to where his boy lay, fearful lest he should find only a mangled corpse, but to his joy he found the child alive and unharmed. His prompt obedience had saved him.

the third call

a "The glory of the Lord was revealed unto him."—*Targum.*

b R. Cecil, M.A.

8—10. (8) **perceived,** *etc.*, at first he thought the boy was dreaming. No doubt in better days, Divine communic. had come to Eli. How sad to be passed by for a child! (9) Obs. how wisely Eli left the whole matter to God, and attempted no explanations of what he thought the voice was. (10) **and stood,** this appears to indicate some bodily presence as well as a voice. Some *vision* of God was vouchsafed.[a]

Importance of improving spiritual opportunities (*vv.* 8, 9).—Consider—I. The importance of spiritual opportunities. II. That attention and prayer is our duty, when such opportunities occur. III. The benefit of religious instructions.[b]—*Divine calls*

v. 10. *W. Gilpin, Ss.* ii. 125; *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* 403; *Divine*

(*v.* 10).—Consider the ways in which Divine calls come to us. I. Perhaps it may be the loss of some dear friend through which the call comes. II. Something occurs to force us to take a part for God or against Him. III. We get acquainted with some one whom God employs to bring before us truths which were closed on us before. IV. We may be in the practice of reading the Scripture carefully, and trying to serve God; and its sense may, as if suddenly, break upon us, in a way it never did before. V. It may happen that we find ourselves, how or why we cannot tell, much more able to obey God in certain respects than before.[c] —*God speaking to Samuel* (*v.* 10).—God speaks to us—I. In His works. By these He tells us that He is—1. Very powerful: therefore we should fear Him; 2. Very wise: therefore we should obey Him; 3. Very good: therefore we should love Him. II. By His providence: by the various events which He causes to happen. He speaks to you by—1. Sickness; 2. Death. III. In His Word: in the Holy Bible.[d]—*The child-seer* (*v.* 10).—I propose to speak to you about—I. A rare visit: the Lord came. In these times, the Bible gives us so much knowledge to guide our ways, that angel visits and Divine dreams are not needed. II. A strange voice. Samuel did not know God's voice when called.[e]

The listening soul (*v.* 10).—The self-resigning soul is still and silent before the Lord: lust and corrupt interests, which make a continual noise and clamour in the unregenerate and unresigned by their importunate solicitations, and fill them with din and tumult, are here quieted and silenced; and therefore such a soul is better prepared to hear God coming to it in the "still small voice" (1 Kings xix. 12), as once He did to Elias. Those soft and gentle whispers of the Spirit, those inward manifestations of Himself, are best discerned and attended to in this solemn silence. When the wind is high, and beats upon the windows and doors of the house, it is hard to hear what is said within. All tumultuous and boisterous passions must be calmed, and the soul be in a state of due stillness and tranquillity, to hear what God speaks to it.[f]

11—14. (11) **tingle,**[a] as if smitten with a sharp blow. (12) **will perform,** *see* ch. ii. 27—36. **when I begin,** *etc.*, proverbial way of saying, I will do it thoroughly.[b] (13) **vile,** or accursed; brought curses on themselves. (14) **sacrifice nor offering,** bloody nor unbloody sacrifices.

A strange coincident (*v.* 13; also ch. viii. 1, 3).—Samuel declared to Eli God's judgments against him and his sons. Samuel in his old age had the bitter grief of seeing his own sons turn aside from the right way. See these two families, and learn—I. That children are often a source of bitterest distress to the best and holiest parents. II. That parents are not punished by God for their children's sins, unless they have neglected their duty towards them. III. That whatever the conduct of the parents, if the children sin they must suffer the penalty themselves. IV. That men may be placed amidst the most desirable influences, may have the brightest examples, may be surrounded by the most likely circumstances, and after all be far from the kingdom of heaven.[c]

The doom of Eli's house.—It was night in the sanctuary. The high priest slept in one of the adjacent chambers, and the

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Calls, Pl. Ss. v. 177; *J. Summerfield, Ss.* 297.

c Dr. J. H. Newman.

d J. A. Fenton, B.A.

"Opportunity is like a favouring breeze springing up around a sailing vessel. If the sails be all set, the ship is wafted onward to its port; if the sailors are asleep or ashore, the breeze may die again, and when they would go on they cannot: their vessel stands as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean."—*U. Mag.*

e Dr. J. Edmond.

Jean Paul says: 'The smallest are nearest God, as the smallest planets are nearest the sun."

f Worthington.

God's message to Samuel

a 2 Ki. xxi. 12; Jer. xix. 3.

b I will go through with the performance from first to last.

vv. 11—13. *E. Bather, Ss.* iii. 478.

vv. 12, 13. *J. Saurin, Ss.* v. 25; *W. Reading, Ss.* iii. 305; *Bp. Hall, Contem.*

c R. A. Griffin.

v. 13. *E. Clement, Ss.* 139; *M. Benson, Ex.* 293;

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Dr. J. Dupre, Ss. i. 106; *Dr. E. Payson, Wks.* iii. 262; *J. Marriott, Ss.* 346; *G. B. Bloomfield. Ss.* 36.

attendant ministers in another. In the centre, on the left of the entrance, stood the seven-branched candlestick, now mentioned for the last time, superseded in the reign of Solomon by the ten separate candlesticks, but revived after the captivity by the copy of the one candlestick with seven branches, as it is still seen on the arch of Titus. It was the only light of the tabernacle during the night, was solemnly lighted every evening as in the devotions of the Eastern world, both Mussulman and Christian, and extinguished just before morning, when the doors were opened. In the deep silence of that early morning, before the sun had risen, when the sacred light was still burning, came through the mouth of the innocent child the doom of the house of Ithamar.[d]

v. 14. *F. D. Maurice, Old Test.* 346.

[d] *Dr. Stanley.*

Samuel tells the Lord's words to Eli

15—18. (15) **opened the doors,** evidently one of Sam.'s ministries. The door was prob. the *hanging curtain* covering the entrance.[a] Gradually signs of a more *permanent* building would be seen upon the tabernacle, and hangings would give place to doors. (16) **Eli called,** no doubt observing how the boy seemed to shrink from him. (17) **God do so to thee,** Ru. i. 17. (18) **every whit,**[b] the whole communication. **let .. good,** comp. Job i. 21, ii. 10.

[a] Ex. xxvi. 36, xxxvi. 37.

[b] A. S., *wiht,* a creature, thing. The smallest particle imaginable.

Eli's submission to the Divine rebukes (v. 18).—Consider—I. The fidelity of Samuel. II. The resignation of Eli. Learn—(1) The importance of exerting our influence for God; (2) The comfort of being interested in the Gospel of Christ.[c]

A happy child.—Befurchte, gardener to Elizabeth, consort of Frederick II., had one little daughter, with whose religious instruction he had taken great pains. When this child was five years of age, the queen saw her one day while visiting the royal gardens at Shonhausen, and was so much pleased with her, that a week afterwards she expressed a wish to see the little girl again. The father accordingly brought his artless child to the palace, and a page conducted her into the royal presence. She approached the queen with untaught courtesy, kissed her robe, and modestly took the seat which had been placed for her, by the queen's order, near her own person. From this position she could overlook the table at which the queen was dining with the ladies of her court, and they watched with interest to see the effect of so much splendour on the simple child. She looked carelessly on the costly dresses of the guests, the gold and porcelain on the table, and the pomp with which all was conducted; and then, folding her hands, she sang, with a clear, childlike voice, these words :—

> "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
> Are all my ornament and dress;
> Fearless, with these pure garments on,
> I'll view the splendours of Thy throne!"

All the assembly were struck with surprise at seeing so much feeling, penetration, and piety in one so young. Tears filled the eyes of the ladies, and the queen exclaimed, "Ah, happy child! how far are we below you!"[d]

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"But peace! I must not quarrel with the will of highest dispensation, which herein haply had ends above my reach to know." —*Milton.*

"The question is, not whether God is on our side, but whether we are on the side of God, for He is always in the right." And, we may add, always on the winning side as well.

It is one thing to be childlike and another to be childish.

[d] *Dr. Haven.*

Samuel recognised as a prophet

19—21. (19) **grew,** obs. the repetition of this expression.[e] **his words,** prophetic words. (20) **Dan to Beersheba,** Ju. xx. 1. (21) **appeared again,** drawing near again, now there was a faithful one through whom he might speak.

[e] "Ever and

Early piety (*v.* 19).—I. The way by which you may endeavour to win the hearts of your children to God. 1. The first lesson to be taught the child is—to obey; 2. Establish and maintain a constant intercourse between your little one's heart and God; 3. Teach your child its dependence on its Creator for life and all enjoyment; 4. Teach it that God is holy, and, consequently, displeased with sin. II. Some dangers which will lie in the path. 1. Do not neglect to cultivate amiable and honourable feelings in your child; 2. Be not too eager for your children to say that they hope they have commenced a life of piety; 3. Be not too ready to believe that their hearts are changed; 4. When you have once cherished hope of their piety be very slow to abandon it; 5. Take care lest the influence of your example, or of some of your measures of government, should encourage evil principles in their hearts; 6. Above all things, be honest and sincere in your efforts to promote their piety. III. Motives to fidelity in the discharge of these duties. 1. God has placed in your hands an influence over your children which is almost boundless; 2. The influence which you now exert upon them will react, after many years, with prodigious power upon yourselves; 3. Remember that you will soon be separated from them.[b]

Revealed (*v.* 21).—This is perhaps with one exception, the earliest use of the word which has since become the name for all Divine communication. On one or two occasions the idea is conveyed in a more precise form, "The Lord uncovered the ear" (chap. ix. 15), a touching and significant figure, taken from the manner in which the possessor of a secret moves back the long hair of his friend, and whispers into the ear thus laid bare the word that no one else may hear. The term "revelation," thence appropriated in the theological language both of the East and West, when thus seen in its primitive form, well expresses the truly philosophical and universal idea which ought to be conveyed by it.[c]

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anon amidst the crimes and terrors of the narrative of that troubled time, . . . the scene of the Sacred Story reveals to us, in successive glimpses, the one peaceful, consoling, hopeful image, and we hear the same gentle undersong of childlike, devoted, continuous goodness."—*Stanley.*

v. 19. *C. E. Kennaway*, 95.

v. 21. *J. S. M. Anderson, Cloud of Witnesses*, ii. 268.

b J. Abbott.

"The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day."—*Milton.*

c Dr. Stanley.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

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1—4. (1) **and . . Israel,** this clause should be added to ch. iii. **came,** marg. came to pass. Narrative of this ch. gives the fulfilment of Sam.'s *first* prophecy, ch. iii. 11—14. **Philistines,** who appear just now to have made a new incursion. **Ebenezer,** this name subseq. given to the place.[a] **Aphek,**[b] as Jos. xv. 53, not as 1 Sa. xxix. 1. (2) **in array,** fit posture to fight. **army,** Heb. *array*, word applied to the soldiers. (3) **elders,** a council was held, but neither Eli, nor Sam., were consulted. **fetch the ark,** either as compelling God's help, not praying for it; or thinking power lay in the *symbol*.[c] (4) **dwelleth,**[d] allusion to Shekinah appearing over mercy-seat.

The ark and the judge.—The practical thoughts suggested by this passage may be associated with two principal objects. I. The ark of the covenant. 1. The ark at Shiloh: (*a*) Its godless guardians, holding office for the sake of power and emolument; (*b*) Not led by their sacred duties to cultivate holiness of heart and life; (*c*) Considering, when commanded to convey the ark to the camp, the will of man rather than of God; 2. The ark in the camp—(*a*) Regarded by the Israelites with vain confidence:

Israel defeated by Philistia.

a 1 Sa. vii. 12.

b "Situate toward the western frontier of Judah, not very far from Mizpeh, of Benjamin."—*Spk. Com.*

c Comp. Nu. x. 35; Jos. iii. 11—13.

d Ex. xxv. 22.

"Such an application of the ark was not without example before or after; but it is evidently described as

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against the higher spirit of the religion which it was intended to support."—*Stanley.*

v. 3. *Bp. Fulford,* ii. 23.

e *S. S. World.*

"Fear is the last of ills: in time we hate that which we often fear." — *Shakespeare.*

f *J. Smith.*

they thought more of the form than of the spirit of religion; (*b*) Regarded by the Philistines with superstitious dread. II. The aged judge. 1. A father disappointed in his children; 2. A priest overruled in his authority by his sons and the elders; 3. A civil ruler trembling for the fate of his country: 4. An old man—father, priest, judge—awaiting in fear news of the battle; 5. An aged man suddenly struck down by bad news too suddenly told. Learn—(1) Filial disobedience is followed by neglect of religious duty and reverence; (2) Be cautious in the telling of important news, whether good or bad; (3) We may maintain the form, and neglect the spirit, of true religion; (4) The form without the spirit will not avail us (iii. 14). We may have the ark of God, but is our heart right with God?[e]

Cause of superstition.—The true cause and rise of superstition is indeed nothing else but a false opinion of the Deity, that renders Him dreadful and terrible, as being vigorous and imperious; that which represents Him as austere, and apt to be angry, but yet impotent, and easy to be appeased again by some flattering devotions, especially if performed with sanctimonious shows, and a solemn sadness of mind.[f]

the ark brought into the camp of Israel

a Word used by Phil. is *Elohim,* the general name for God, not *Jehovah,* the covenant name.

b Ex. xv. 14.

c Lat., *quietare,* to dismiss, fr. *quietus,* quiet, so to meet the claims upon, or expectations entertained of. See 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Quit, in the sense of acquit, to discharge a duty, and so to free oneself fr. the obligation of it, "seem to defend yourself; now *quit* you well."—*Shakespeare,* "Lear," ii. 1.

"Fear is the tax that conscience pays to guilt."—*Sewell.*

d *Hive.*

5—9. (5) **earth rang,** as vibrating with the noise. "The appearance of the ark roused, as with a spasmodic effort, the sinking spirit of the army." Obs. the indic. of wide-spread belief in *national* and *local* deities. (6) **Hebrews,** the name by which Israel was known to foreigners. (7) **God is come,** the Israelites' God.[a] (8) **that smote,** remembrance of the great deliv. fr. Egypt still lingered among the nations.[b] (9) **quit,**[c] behave yourselves.

Night and morning.—1. A morning scene. Describe the two armies assembled for battle. Help the description by 1 Sam. xvii. 1—3. As usual, near enough to taunt one another. Then getting the battle in order, and some hours of hand-to-hand fighting. All this is man's skill and bravery, without God. 2. A night scene. Triumph and feasting in Philistine camp, wailing and alarm in camp of Israel. Earnest consultation what was to be done. Plans suggested, but no penitent seeking of God. 3. Next morning's scene. Plan resolved on put in operation. Ark brought out. Sons of Eli in charge. Eli very anxious. Israel shouting, as if they already had victory. They had with them only God's symbol, not God. 4. Next night's scene. Defeat. Lost ark. Dead priests. Dreadful accident to old Eli. Sad fruits of wrong-doing.[e]

Napoleon and his soldiers.—As Napoleon's soldiers were standing on an eminence, gazing upon the pyramids of Egypt, just before he made his descent upon the Mamelukes, he cried out, "Soldiers, from the summits of yonder pyramids, forty ages survey your conduct; act like heroes." Ye Christians! fighting for truth and heaven, under the command of Jesus, from the summits of the everlasting hills in heaven, and from the blazing thrones of eternity, ten thousand angels and saints, with the Almighty Sovereign for whom you are fighting, are surveying your conduct. Be strong. Quit you like men. Be valiant for the truth. "Act like heroes."

the ark captured

10—13. (10) **they fled,** the defeat of previous day was disheartening, but temporary, this was overwhelming and final.

(11) **slain,**[a] let us hope, defending the ark to the last. (12) **there ran,** information was in those days conveyed by swift runners.[b] **clothes . . head,** "the two Oriental signs of grief and dismay."[c] (13) **seat,**[d] in usual place, at entrance of city, or beside gateway of sanctuary. **cried out,** the usual Eastern *wail*, in time of calamity.

Eli's anxiety for the ark of God (*v.* 13).—Consider—I. The grounds of his anxiety. He did not doubt whether God was *able* to protect His ark ; but he had just grounds to doubt whether He *would* protect it. II. The issue of it. Learn from this history—(1) The inefficacy of ordinances ; (2) The danger of presumption ; (3) The necessity of walking in the fear of God.[e]

Eli's seat—Eastern chairs (*see also v.* 18).—Eli therefore sat on an elevated seat. Seats from which even a man old and heavy could fall and injure himself, are not now employed in the East, and do not appear to have been in use among the Hebrews. Eli's seat would appear to have been a sort of throne-seat, peculiar to him as a mark of his dignity. Indeed the Heb. word is never used but to denote the seat of some dignified person, as of a king, high-priest, judge, or prophet, as may be seen by comparing the following passages in which it occurs—2 Sam. vii. 13 ; 1 Ki. x. 19 ; 2 Ki. iv. 10 ; 1 Ch. xxii. 10 ; Job xxvi. 9 ; Ps. cxxii. 5 ; Ne. iii. 7. It includes therefore the throne, and all raised seats of authority. From the absence of any mention of other than such seats, as well as from many direct intimations, it appears sufficiently probable that the Israelites sat, as the Orientals now do, on mats, rugs, etc., laid upon the ground, or indeed seated themselves on the bare ground.

14—18. (14) **came in,** to the place where Eli was, to give message direct to him. (15) **ninety and eight,**[a] an age involving great helplessness, and prob. heavy weight of body. **were dim,** Heb. *stood*, were fixed, so that he could not see the rent garments of the man. (16) **to-day,** showing the battle had been fought not very far off. (17) In the man's eagerness he does not attempt to break the tidings gradually. (18) **fell off,** in sudden stroke of anguish : heart-broken at the news concerning the ark.

A troubled sunset (*v.* 18).—This touching story contains—I. A special lesson to parents. What a heritage of sorrow and suffering might not Eli have warded off by fidelity to that immortal trust confided to him. II. A general lesson to all. 1. To sinners. Learn from Eli's death that God will not wink at sin. Even in His own people He will punish it. Take heed, then, sinner. 2. To saints—to believers—and to the Church. A lesson of imitation. "The ark of God taken." Eli listened to the other crushing tidings with calm magnanimity. But he cannot survive the last blow.[b]

An aged Christian's trouble.—An aged Christian, in great distress of mind, was once complaining to a friend of his miserable condition ; and, among other things, said, "That which troubles me most is that God will be dishonoured by my fall." His friend hastily caught at this, and used it for the purpose of comforting him. "Art thou careful of the honour of God? and dost thou think that God hath no care of thee, and of thy salva-

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by the Philistines

a 1 Sa. ii. 34.

b 2 Sa. xviii. 19—31.

c 2 Sa. i. 2 ; Job ii. 12.

d "**An official** chair, similar to those of the ancient Egyp. judges, richly carved, superbly ornamented, high, and *without a back.*"—*Jamieson.*

v. 11. *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 453.

v. 13. *E. Calamy, Farewell Ss.* 332 ; *N. Hill*, 121 ; *C. Bradley*, ii. 88 ; *Ep. Dehon*, ii. 442.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

the death of Eli

a Sept. has 90 years, the Syriac and Arabic, 78."—*Spk. Com.*

"The career of Eli as high priest and judge is supposed to have begun during the Philistine oppression, and 20 years before the death of Jair. Jair ruled on the east of Jordan, and Eli in the southern part of Canaan. Samson is supposed to have begun his active career two years before the death of Eli, and to have died 21 years later. Two years after Samson began his career, judging west of Canaan, Samuel began his as judge, suc-

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ceding Eli; he is supposed to have outlived Samson 21 years." — *Heroes and Judges.*
b Dr. Macduff.

birth of Ichabod

a Gesenius.

b Mat. Henry, after LXX.

c Spk. Com.

d "The ark, being the visible centre of the theocratic system of Israel, its capture was the departure of Israel's glory, and is spoken of as the 'captivity of the land,' see Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 22. *H. Hughes, Fem. Cha.* ii. 108.

e J. Parsons.

"If parents were really faithful to their children, there would be very few unconverted adults."— *Baxter.*

Importance of Children. — "Fragile beginnings of a mighty end." —*Hon. Mrs. Norton.*

f J. Bate.

tion? A soul forsaken of God cares not what becomes of the honour of God. Therefore be of good cheer: if God's heart were not towards thee, thine would not be towards God, or towards the remembrance of His name."

19—22. (19) **bowed herself,** sank on her knees. (20) **fear not,** endeavouring to cheer her, and divert her thought to the joy of her son. **answered not,** as a mother might be expected to. (21) **Ichabod,** *no glory;*[a] *alas, for the glory;*[b] *there is no glory,* or *where is the glory?*[c] (22) **departed,** "properly is gone into captivity."[d]

The concern of the pious for religion in peril (*v.* 22).—We propose to notice—I. The properties of true religion, as indicated by the symbol under which it is represented. The ark was—1. Associated with immediate and visible displays of the Divine presence; 2. Identified with the Divinely-appointed mediation for the pardon of human sin; 3. The instrument of Divine protection, in behalf of the people, who possessed and who rightly applied to it. II. The danger in which the interests of religion, like the ancient symbol, may appear to be involved. That which arises from—1. The efforts of open and avowed adversaries to its claims; 2. The evils which exist and are cherished within its own internal sphere—(1) Errors in doctrine; (2) Discords; (3) Worldly conformities. III. The emotions which this apparent danger must properly produce. 1. Their nature; 2. The manner in which they may be soothed; 3. The deportment to which they should prompt: care, holy zeal for souls, importunity in prayer.[e]

Care of the young.—A gentleman was once walking over the farm of his friend, and observing the very superior sheep which he had, he asked him how it was he came to have them so fine? His reply was, "I take care of my lambs, sir." What an important lesson this teaches fathers, mothers, teachers, and ministers! If we want the future generation to be sober, wise, religious, let us take care of them while they are children. The florist and gardener take care of the buds and blossoms, in order that the fruit may be good. So let all those who have in any way the charge of the young pay particular attention to their physical, moral, social, mental, and religious training, so that their subsequent years may bear good fruit to the world and to God.[f]

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Dagon falls before the ark

a Ewald.

b Jos. xiii. 3.

c "Dagon in his own temple fell down like a prisoner before his conqueror, or like a suppliant before his god." —*Wordsworth.*

d See Zep. i. 8—9.

1—5. (1) **Ebenezer,** *see* ch. vii. 12. **Ashdod,** "then perhaps reckoned the capital of their 5 little kingdoms."[a] *Azotus* in Sept., and Acts viii. 40, now *Esdud.*[b] (2) **Dagon,** Ju. xvi. 23. **set it by,** as a trophy of victory. (3) **fallen,** as if bowing to the symbol of Jehovah.[c] (4) **the head,** *etc.,* the parts of Dagon that were like a man were broken off, only the ignoblest part, the stump, or fishy part, was left, lit. *only Dagon was left:* Dagon fr. *dag,* a fish. (5) **tread on,** *etc.,* a custom prob. continued to reign of Josiah at least.[d]

Dagon and the ark (*vv.* 3—5).—This remarkable and mysterious event may be looked upon—I. As prophetic of the future downfall of idolatry. II. As instructing us how this will be accomplished—not by the sword, but by making known the will of

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God. III. Once overthrown, no attempt to establish idolatry shall succeed.

Dagon.—Dagon, the principal deity of the Philistines, was represented by an image having the head, arms, and bust of a man, sometimes of a female, and the tail of a fish. The name is derived from the Heb. *dag*, "a fish." It was in Dagon's temple at Gaza that Samson was exposed to the mockery of the crowd; and there he sacrificed his own life in executing a last signal act of vengeance on the enemies of his country. It was in Dagon's temple at Ashdod that the captured ark was placed; and the sacred narrative is illustrated by the knowledge we have of the hybrid form of the idol. It is related that the image fell to the earth before the ark, that his head and the palms of his hands were broken off, "and only Dagon was left to him." The human part was broken, and "the fish," *dagon*, alone remained perfect.

On cap. v., *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 189; *Bp. Hall, Contem.* v. 4, *W. Penn, Ss.* (1830), 203.

We need not fear for God's honour though His ark may be in the hands of His enemies. He knows how to make the wrath of men to praise Him, and to make defeat His best victory. Gen. l. 20; Ex. ix. 16, xviii. 11; Ps. lxxvi. 10; Dan. iii. 19, 20, 28; Acts ii. 36.

6—9. (6) **emerods,** hemorrhoids, as De. xxviii. 27; "bleeding piles, a disease said to be common in Syria at the present time."[a] (7) **hand is sore,** diseases of this kind usually regarded as direct punishment of gods for sins of sacrilege. (8) **Gath,** they sent it to this place, supposing some *bad luck* attached to its presence in Ashdod. Gath was prob. between Ashdod and Ekron.[b] (9) **small and great,** as we say, rich and poor, a general outbreak of painful and shameful disease.

Philistia is troubled because of the ark

a *Ayre, S. Cox.*

b Jos. xiii. 3.

"Site of Gath not certainly known, it was prob. in interior of Phil., 10 miles E. of Ashdod, at a place now called *Tell-es-Safieh*, and about the same distance S.E. of Ekron."—*Porter.*

So let Dagon fall (*see also v.* 3).—Soon after the commencement of the ministerial labours of the Rev. S. Kilpin, of Exeter, several trivial circumstances gave an entire change to his style of preaching. He was in the habit of studying closely, and writing nearly the whole of his sermons, to which he made reference during the time of their delivery. Thus furnished, he visited some part of Wales. Immense congregations assembled. He was told that they did not like any but extemporaneous preaching. For this he was not prepared; but by condensing his subject he lessened the appearance of his notes. With a trembling hand, he placed his remarks in the Bible, so neatly that his fears vanished. This, however, was followed by a hard cough, which, to his dismay, released the concealed paper, and sent it into a current of air, where it floated as a kite over the heads of the people. He breathed a momentary prayer for aid, when with good humour he said, "So let Dagon fall; we will endeavour to seek higher assistance." This pleased the congregation; he was enabled calmly to collect his thoughts, and the sermon was made a blessing.

"Fear is the white-lipped sire of subterfuge and treachery."—*Mrs. Sigourney.*

10—12. (10) **Ekron,** now *Akir*, the most N.W. city of Philistia, where Beelzebub was worshipped.[a] (11) **send away,** fr. the country, back again to its home. The same two visitations[b] followed the ark to Ekron. (12) **died not,** this expression appears to indic. some additional form of plague. **the cry,** wail of grief and despair. Ge. xviii. 20.

the ark sent to Ekron

a 2 Ki. i. 2.

b Their bodies plagued with loathsome disease, and their fields wasted by a fearfully in-

Religion a trouble to the ungodly (*v.* 10).—I. What the ark of God really was intended to be, and for whom. II. What it was to the Philistines, and why. III. What was needful in order that the ark might be a blessing and not a curse. IV. Are there not some to whom the Bible is as the ark to these Philistines!

A Socinian's fear.—A physician, who had imbibed Socinian

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creasing multitude of all-devouring mice.

"In politics, what begins in fear usually ends in folly."—*Coleridge.*

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what shall we do to the ark of the Lord?

a Comp. Ex. vii. 11; Da. ii. 2.

b "Three modes of divination are described, by *arrows*, by *teraphim*, and by the *entrails of beasts*."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 1. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 1.

v. 3. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 343.

'Fear is often concealed by a show of daring." *Lucan.*

the test of providence or chance

a It was customary among Easterns and even among early Cns. to dedicate images or pictures of diseased members as votive offerings to the gods.

b "The *jerboa*, or jumping mouse of Syria and Egypt."—*Bochart.*

c Jos. xxi. 16.

d Jos. xv. 10.

"Such representations may be seen still on the *Pnyx* at Athens."—*Wordsworth.*

"More prob. the short-tailed field-

principles, made it his chief concern, in matters of religion, to degrade the character and dignity of Christ. Such was his contempt for Him that he seldom spoke of Him in conversation under any other name than the carpenter's son. At length he was seized with affliction, which terminated in his death. Awhile before his departure, the servant who attended him, on entering his room, found him in great agitation. On inquiring the cause, he answered, "I am a dying man, and that which most of all affects me is that I must be judged by the carpenter's Son!"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—3. (1) **seven months,** during wh. time no effort was made by Is. to recover it: from October till May. (2) **diviners,**[a] the word is always used of idolatrous and superstitious divining.[b] (3) **empty,** without a gift. **trespass-offering,** wh. would involve acknowledgment of sin. Obs. that now they speak of the ark of *Jehovah*, acknowl. Him as God of Israel.

What shall we do with the ark? (*v.* 2).—I. The ungodly ask the question in perplexity, wishing they could destroy it. II. The superstitious ask the question in regard to imposing ritual, etc. They would defy it. III. The godly ask it with lowly reverence and humble faith, as anxious to do as God would have them.

Will my case be called to-day?—So asked a client of his lawyer, with the greatest eagerness, having heard that the Lord Chancellor's decision was expected. "Are you sure," was his anxious inquiry, "that nothing is left undone? If judgment is pronounced against me, I am a ruined man." The lawyer was a Christian man, and the question suggested to him the solemn inquiry, "What if my case come on to-day, before the eternal Judge whose sentence there is no reversing! Am I prepared?" Let every reader put the important question to himself—"Is nothing left undone for me?"

4—9. (4) **golden emerods,** gold mounted to represent the diseased parts of the body.[a] **mice,**[b] wh. breed under some conditions so rapidly as to destroy almost an entire crop of wheat. (5) **mar,** damage, spoil. (6) **wonderfully,** in ways of judgment. (7) **new cart,** so not polluted by previous use. **milch kine,** who would naturally be unwilling to leave their calves; so if they went towards Is. it would show Divine guidance. (8) **jewels,** or ornaments, gifts, as *v.* 4. **by the side,** the Phil. neither looked into the ark, nor ventured to put their presents in it. (9) **Bethshemesh,** now *Ain Shems*,[c] a city of the priests,[d] on the borders of Judah and Dan.

Providence and chance (*v.* 9).—I. There is a superstitious calling of all mysteries acts of Providence. II. There is a godless imputing of all trial and affliction to chance. III. There is a wise desire to be informed of God. And here we have an instance of Divine condescension in that He overruled animal instincts (see note on *v.* 7) for the instruction of these people.

Instances of superstition.—Superstition is an opinion of the works of God's providence, the reason whereof can neither be drawn out of the Word of God, nor the whole course of nature: for example, that it is unlucky for one in the morning to put on his shoe awry; or to put on the left shoe on the right foot; to

sneeze in drawing on his shoes; to have salt fall towards him; to bleed some few drops of blood. Again, that it is good luck to find old iron; to have drink spilled on him; to pare our nails on some certain day of the week; to dream of some certain things.[c]

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mouse. *achbar.*"—*Gesenius.*

v. 6. *J. Gregorie, Wks.* i. 35.

e W. Perkins.

10–13. (10) **did so,** as *v.* 7. (11) **laid the ark,** stood it up safely on the cart. (12) **lowing as they went,** in yearning for their calves, but Divinely constrained and guided. **lords,** satraps. (13) **wheat harvest,** about Pentecost.

Observation in the harvest-field (*v.* 13).—What should men observe in the harvest-field? I. Signs from God. Every harvest scene a new Divine revelation. There is—1. His goodness; 2. His power; 3. His faithfulness; 4. His eternity. II. Life from death. All this life in the harvest-field has come out of death. This fact serves—1. To symbolise spiritual labour; 2. To indicate the possibility of a resurrection. III. Like from like. Each seed has come forth in its own kind. 1. It is thus in spiritual things; 2. It will be somewhat thus in the resurrection of the dead. IV. Much from little. Each seed is multiplied. V. Blessings from labour. VI. Maturity from progress. All things tend to ripeness. 1. All nature; 2. All society; 3. All classes of character; 4. The human world itself.[a]

Rejoicing at the coming of the Word of God.—When the arrival of the cart which carried the first sacred load of the Scriptures to Wales in 1816, sent by the British and Foreign Bible Society, was announced, the Welsh peasants went out in crowds to meet it; welcomed it as the Israelites did the ark of old; drew it into the town; and eagerly bore off every copy as rapidly as they could be dispersed. The young people were to be seen spending the whole night in reading it. Labourers carried it with them to the field, that they might enjoy it during the intervals of their labour, and lose no opportunity of becoming acquainted with its sacred truths. Let those consider this who despise or neglect the Bible; who have it, but seldom open it; or when they do, slumber over it as a record in which they have little or no interest, and soon lay it aside in weariness or disgust.

the ark is conveyed to Bethshemesh

a Dr. Thomas.

"He who cannot find time to consult his Bible, will find one day that he has time to be sick; he who has no time to pray, must find time to die; he who can find no time to reflect, is most likely to find time to sin; he who cannot find time for repentance, will find an eternity, in which repentance will be of no avail." — *H. More.*

George, Prince of Transylvania, read over the Bible twenty-seven times.

14–18. (14) **stood there,** the oxen standing still of their own accord. **great stone,** wh. at once suggested the idea of an altar and a sacrifice. **kine,** plural of *cow.* (15) **Levites,** some of whom were dwelling in this priestly city. (16) **seen,** the result of their diviner's scheme. (17) **emerods,** one to represent each of the 5 cities of their country. (18) **mice,** representing the smaller towns and villages.[a] **great Abel,** word *stone* is not in the original. The stone in Joshua's field may well have been called *Abel mourning.*

the stone of Abel

a "Lit. from fenced city even unto country village." — *Wordsworth.*

Providence.—

> There is a power
> Unseen, that rules th' illimitable world,—
> That guides its motions, from the brightest star
> To the least dust of this sin-tainted mould;
> While man, who madly deems himself the lord
> Of all, is nought but weakness and dependence.
> This sacred truth, by sure experience taught,
> Thou must have learnt, when wandering all alone,
> Each bird, each insect, flitting through the sky,
> Was more sufficient for itself than thou.[b]

"Look above you, and in the overarching firmament read the truth of an all-pervading Providence. Your sky is God's outspread hand, and the glittering stars the jewels on the fingers of the Almighty. Do you not see that His hand closes round on all sides? and that you cannot go where universal love shines not?" —*Rev. H. Gill.*

b Thomson.

B.C. 1140.

men of Bethshemesh smitten

a "It is not improbable that in their festive rejoicing they had fallen into intemperance, and so were led to pry into the sacred ark." —*Spk. Com.*

b "Prob. it should read, '*He smote fifty out of a thousand*, and the full number was 70.'"—*Jamieson. Syriac* and *Arabic* versions give the number as 5,070.

v. 19. *B. Kennicott, Obs.*

c C. Simeon, M.A. While we can come into God's presence with the trusting confidence of a child, we are not to treat Him or His sanctuary with irreverent familiarity. Lev. xix. 30; Ps. lxxxix. 7, cxi. 9; Heb. xii. 28, 29.

d Parnell.

19—21. (19) **looked into,** with irreverent curiosity,[a] lamented, prob. this scene fixed the name on the stone. *Abel.* The number of persons slain is prob. incorrect. *Josephus* gives it as *threescore and ten*, without the fifty thousand.[b] (20) **able to stand,** learning a lesson of reverence by a great calamity. (21) **Kirjath-jearim,** Jos. ix. 17.

The ark returned to Bethshemesh (*v.* 20.)—Consider—I. The grounds and occasions of the question of our text. God had prevailed over the idolatrous Philistines. He had punished also His own presumptuous people. II. The answer to be given to it. Whatever reason for despondency there was in their apprehension, there was none in reality. But doubtless the wicked can never stand before God. Observe—(1) How great an enemy to our welfare is slavish fear; (2) What a comfort to the soul is the knowledge of Christ.[c]

Providence incomprehensible.—A hermit, having seen an innocent shepherd punished with death, began to distrust Providence. Leaving his cave, and going forth into the world, an angel met and journeyed with him. The first night they were entertained by a knight, whose infant child the angel strangled. From their next kind host, the angel stole a priceless golden cup, which he gave to their next host, a churlish man, who would only allow them to sleep in a shed. Passing a poor man on a bridge, the angel pushed him into the stream, and he was drowned. The hermit now thought his companion a devil instead of an angel. The angel explained that, if the shepherd had not been slain, he would have committed great crimes; that the man whose child he strangled would have wasted his life in heaping up treasures for the child; that the golden cup would have led its possessor to a drunkard's grave; that the man whom he drowned would himself have committed murder had he gone a half-mile farther; that he gave the cup to the inhospitable rich man, who received his reward in this life.[d]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) **Abinadab,**[a] no doubt a Levite. **in the hill,** Kirjath-jearim was situate on a hill. Some translate, as a proper name, *Gibeah.*[b] **sanctified,** set apart, or consecrated. **to keep,** if not a Levite, this only means, to *take charge of*, or *preserve.* If a Levite, it has usual meaning, *attend upon.*[c] (2) **twenty years,** before Is. began to repent and revive. Ark was prob. some fifty years at this place,[d] or at Nob.[e] (3) **Samuel,** coming forward at fit occasion. **Ashtaroth,** Ju. ii. 13. **deliver . . Phil.,**[f] who prob. occupied the country round Shiloh. (4) **Baalim,** plur. form of Baal, Ju. ii. 11.

the ark at Kirjath-jearim

a His descendants appear as keepers of the ark in Dav.'s time, 2 Sa. vi. 3.

b Vulgate.

c "To give ark to the care of any but Levites would be gross violation of the law, and the names Eleazar, Uzzah, and Ahio, are all names in Lev. families."—*Spk. Com.*

d 2 Sa. vi.; 1 Chr xiii.

An ideal statesman (on the whole chapter).—We have here before us a pattern statesman. I. He was a man of spiritual disposition. This was shown by—1. His expostulation with the people (*v.* 3). This expostulation contains—(1) A supposition: "if ye do return;" (2) Instruction: "put away the strange gods;" (3) An assurance: "and He will deliver you." It was also timely and successful (*v.* 4). 2. His supplication to the apostate nation. A convention of the people and their humiliation by—(1) Prayer: "I will pray;" (2) Fasting (*v.* 6); (3)

Penitent joy; (4) Sacrifice (*v.* 9). 3. His strict recognition of God. This is observable in—(1) The ordinary life of the nation; (2) Important national crises. Note his action after the victory over the Philistines. This victory led to retrospection—"hitherto:" perpetuation—"took a stone:" ministration—"hath helped us." II. Such character may hopefully anticipate the co-operation of heaven. Note in the narrative—1. A religious assembly mistaken for a national army (*v.* 7); 2. The worshippers surprised: they were timorous, and yet victorious; 3. In the elevation of spiritual character, we have a guarantee for the execution of justice; 4. Home, the sanctuary of public life. (1) Samuel's return (*v.* 17); (2) His devotion. Learn:—(1) The practical influence of one holy life upon a nation; (2) National humiliations are acceptable to God; (3) God's mercy illustrated in the victories of life; 4. Public life should have its altar of devotion.*f*

Kirjath-jearim: the city of forests (*v.* 2).—This city, as its name imports, was situated in the vicinity of a wood, about eight miles west of Jerusalem, near the common borders of Judah, Dan and Benjamin. Dr. Robinson, in his *Biblical Researches*, indulges in an interesting argument to prove the identity of Kuriet el'Aineb with Kirjath-jearim.

"If this was Kirjath-jearim, the ark must have had a rough road from there to the city. The house of Abinadab appears not to have been in Yarim itself, but on the hill north-west of it. In 1 Sam. vii. 1, our version has it "hill," but in 2 Sam. vi. 3, 4, the Hebrew word, Gibeah, is retained, as if it were a separate village. It is not likely, however, that there was a town adjoining Yarim, with the identical name of another place not far off to the north, and I suppose that the house of Abinadab, where the ark abode, was on the hill above, not at a village called Gibeah. Such an arrangement would be the most convenient and satisfactory to the congregation which assembled from all parts to worship before the ark. The hill was probably called Gibeah by way of eminence, after the ark had been brought there; and thus our translators may have indicated the exact truth by translating it hill, when it is first mentioned, and Gibeah, twenty years afterwards, when David and all Israel went to remove the ark to Jerusalem. There is no obvious reason at present why it should be called *Yarim*—rocky forests. There are *waars*, however, on every side almost, and some very impracticable ones north and south-west of it."*g*

5—8. (5) **Mizpeh** (*watch-tower*), prob. *Neby Samvil.*[a] Assemblies of the Is. were often convened here.[b] Some identify with *Scopus*,[c] just close to Jerusalem. (6) **drew water**, *etc.*, symbolical act, testifying their need of purification, and their pouring out their hearts to God in penitence and prayer. A day of general humiliation;[d] not the ceremony of feast of tabernacles. **judged**, began to judge, Ex. xviii. 13—16. (17) **the lords**, uniting their forces. (8) **cease not**, be not silent fr. crying. Sam. known to have remarkable power in prayer.

Three notable places.—I. Mizpeh.—(1) The summons of the heaven-appointed prophet; (2) The gathering of the oppressed, fearful, and penitent people; (3) The offering of intercessory prayer, and of the sacrifice; (4) The mustering and approach of the Philistian clans. II. Ebenezer.—(1) The conflict, the storm,

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Josephus, Bp. Patrick, Kell, and others support the idea that Abin. was a Levite.

e 1 Sa. xxi. 1.

f De. xxx. 1—3; 1 Ki. viii. 47—50; Is. lv. 7; Hos. vi. 1; Joel ii. 12, 13.

v. 2. *O. Heywood, Wks.* iii. 385; *J. S. M. Anderson*, ii. 282.

"With grave aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd a pillar of state; deep on his front engraven, deliberation sat, and public care; and princely counsel in his face shone majestic."—*Milton.*

"In a free country there is much clamour with little suffering; in a despotic state, there is little complaint, but much suffering."—*Carnot.*

So long as you abide in unbelief, so long the wrath of God abideth on you.

g Thomson.

Israel summoned to Mizpeh

a Wordsworth, Robinson.

b Ju. xx. 1, 3. xxi. 1, 5, 8; 1 Sa. x. 17.

c Grove, Bonar, Stanley, "The broad ridge wh. forms the continuation of the Mt. of Olives to the North and East." — *Smith's Dic.*

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d Comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 14; 1 Chr. xi. 18; Ps. vi. 6, xxii. 14; Jer. xiv. 17; La. i. 16, ii. 18, 19.

v.6. Dr. T. Franklin, i. 307.

c S. S. World.

"With every exertion, the best of men can do but a moderate amount of good; but it seems in the power of the most contemptible individual to do incalculable mischief."—*Washington Irving.*

the attack by Israel, the rout of Philistia; (2) The stone of help, old associations, new suggestions; (3) Where we have been conquered we may prove victors. Try again—against sin, habit, etc., but first seek the Lord. III. Ramah—its associations.—(1) A prophet's birthplace; (2) A judge's home; (3) The place of the altar. With what kind of conduct and feeling is our native place and home associated? This great and good old man the outgrowth of a good child, who ministered before the Lord in his youth.*c*

Pouring water on the ground (*v.* 6.)—This was a symbolical action, which, according to accompanying circumstances and rites, might have different meanings. It was practised in after ages among the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, as a sign of rejoicing, Is. xii. 3; Jo. vii. 37, 38. As on this occasion it was united with confession of sin, some regard it as representing penitence and humiliation; others think it was the symbol of a solemn vow. In ancient times almost every solemn act was accompanied by libations, or the outpouring of some fluid, generally wine; though sometimes water was used for the purpose. In India, pouring water on the ground is a very ancient way of confirming an oath. In this way they probably made a vow to the Lord to follow the advice of Samuel, and put away for ever "strange gods" from them. As though they should say, "Our words have gone forth, and cannot be recalled,"—as further illustrated by 2 Sa. xiv. 14.

Ebenezer

a Le. xxii. 27.

b Comp. Jos. x. 11; Ju. iv. 15, v. 20—22.

c Ayre.

v. 10. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 15.

v. 12. *T. Boston*, iv. 52; *T. Scott*, iv. 362; *Bp. Doane*, 119.

d J. Hoatson.

"Quick is the succession of human events; the cares of to-day are seldom the cares of to-morrow; and when we lie down at night, we may safely say to most of our troubles, Ye have done your worst, and we shall meet no more."—*Cowper.*

"Providence has given us hope and sleep, as a compensation

9—12. (9) **lamb**,*a* term here used is only found besides in Is. lxv. 25. **burnt-offering**, Le. vi. 8—13. (10) **thundered**, indic. of a tremendous storm.*b* (11) **Beth-car**, *house of pasture*, west of Mizpeh, exact site unknown. (12) **Shen**, *tooth*, prob. a rock or peak, shaped like a tooth.*c* **Ebenezer**, stone of help.

Ebenezer (*v.* 12).—"Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." See in this monument of victory—I. A memorial of past favours and assistance. As God had helped the Israelites of old, so He has "hitherto helped us." Look at—1. Our temporal benefits: health, strength, etc.; 2. Our spiritual advantages: birth in a Christian land, possession of God's Word, the enjoyment of ministerial instruction, etc. II. A hint of future blessings. God will not desert us. For new trials, we shall receive new strength; over new enemies we shall obtain new victories. And at last, in a new abiding-place, we shall receive a new and glorious reward. III. An incentive to present labour. We should be urged to work for God by—1. Gratitude; 2. A desire to obtain the future reward.*d*

Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.—In the years 1821 and 1822, the Hottentots could scarcely procure a morsel of bread, and the garden vegetables almost entirely failed; they were driven for their chief support to the wild fruits of the fields and woods. Those among them who had felt the power of the grace of God, displayed its influence in a very striking manner. A missionary said, "It is distressing to see what hunger they sometimes endure, but also edifying to find them so firm in their faith and confidence in God. I asked some, who had formerly enjoyed plenty and comfort, whether they had not rather return, as they found living so hard." One said, "No, indeed; in that place I had food for my body, but not for my soul; the Gospel, that I hear in this place, is more to me than victuals and drink." "It

is true," said another, "I often go to bed with an empty stomach, but I pray to the Saviour to make me satisfied, and feel no inclination to complain. It will not be always so; and though my garden fruits are all burnt up, I will plant again and again, till it shall please God to make it grow." Their hope in the providence of God was not disappointed.[e]

13—17. (13) **coast,** border, or district. **days of Sam.,** *i.e.* of his government. (14) **restored,** though not recorded, Sam. evidently set up a vigorous government. **Amorites,** they prob. assisted in subduing the Phil.[a] They were remnants of the ancient people of the land. (15) **judged,** *etc.*, as prophet-judge. Military part subseq. given to Saul. (16) **Bethel,** Ge. xii. 8. **Gilgal,** Jos. iv. 19, 20. (17) **Ramah,** 1 Sa. i. 1.

Samuel's judicial character (*vv.* 15—17).—Consider—I. The advantages of Israel under the government of Samuel. See how eminent he was in—1. The administration of justice; 2. The maintenance of true religion. II. The superior advantages which we enjoy under our government. We very far excel the time of Samuel in—1. Our legal proceedings; 2. Our religious privileges. Learn—(1) How to appreciate the blessings you enjoy; (2) How to improve the influence you possess.[b]

An honest judge.—Louis the Fourteenth had granted a pardon to a nobleman who had committed some very great crime. M. Voisin, the chancellor, ran to him in his closet, and exclaimed, "Sire, you cannot pardon a person in the situation of M.——." "I have promised him," replied the king, who was ever impatient of contradiction; "go and fetch the great seal." "But, sire——" "Pray, sir, do as I order you." The chancellor returns with the seals; Louis applies them himself to the instrument containing the pardon, and gives them again to the chancellor. "They are polluted now, sire," exclaims the intrepid and excellent magistrate, pushing them from him on the table, "I cannot take them again." "What an impracticable man!" cries the monarch, and throws the pardon into the fire. "I will now, sire, take them, again," said the chancellor; "the fire, you know, purifies everything."

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for the many cares of life."—*Voltaire.*

e Whitecross.

Samuel as judge

a "Finding the Phil. worse masters than the Israelites, the Amor. made common cause with Samuel, and assisted the Israelites."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 15, 16. *Dr. A. Littleton,* 31.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"It is necessary, in order to do well, to join strength with justice; but with this difference, that strength obeys justice as feudal dane and mistress, and does nothing in the spite of her authority, wish, or command."—*Michel l'Hospital.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1112.

1—5. (1) **old,** prob. abont sixty. (2) **Joel,** *Jehovah is his God.* **Abiah,** *whose Father is Jehovah.* **Beersheba,** Ge. xxi. 14, in the south of Palestine. (3) **lucre,**[a] money, advantage, generally used in bad sense. **bribes,**[b] De. xvi. 19. (4) **Ramah,** place of Sam.'s residence. (5) **a king,**[c] obs. how distinct fr. a judge: permanent, systematic, hereditary, with established court, offices, etc.

Political transitions (*v.* 5).—Political transitions. I. As founded on the most frivolous pretext. This political change was founded on—1. The old age of Samuel; 2. The conduct of his sons. (1) This plea was unjust to Samuel; (2) The grievance might have been remedied. II. As pursued in antagonism to the Divine will. Consider—1. The Divine permission; 2. The Divine protestation. III. As involving the most alarming circumstances. 1. The despotic character of their future ruler: he would—(1) Disregard life's dearest relationships; (2) Impose

the ungodly sons of Samuel

a Fr. Lat. *lucrum,* gain.

b Ex. xviii. 21, 22; Je. xxii. 15—17; 1 Ti. iii. 3, vi. 10.

c "Their sin did not consist simply in wishing to have a king, but in not waiting patiently until God was pleased to give them a king."—*Wordsworth.*

B.C. *cir.* 1112.

"So far it was well, that they did not rise up in rebellion, and set up a king for themselves."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 3. *Dr. J. Peddie,* 260.

vv. 4, 7. *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Ki.* 1.

v. 5. *J. Saurin,* iv. 208.

d J. S. Exell.

e Kitto.

Israel demands a king

a "Sam. told them what a king might do, *de jure;* and also to what they must submit, if he did it, *de facto.*"—*Bp. Sanderson.*

vv. 6, 7. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 33.

v. 9. *Bp. Hoadley,* ii. 109.

"King-becoming graces are justice, verity, temperance, stableness, bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness, devotion, patience, courage, fortitude."—*Shakespeare.*

"That king shall best govern his realm that reigneth over his people as a father doth over his children."—*Agesilaus*

b S. S World.

"In care they live, and must for many care; and such the best and greatest ever are."—*Lord Brooke.*

several burdens of service; (3) Distribute property arbitrarily; 2. The withdrawal of Divine sympathy in this extremity.[d]

The desire for a king.—The Eastern mind is so essentially and pervadingly regal, that to be without a monarch is scarcely an intelligible state of things to an Oriental. . . . The want of a royal head must often have been cast in the teeth of the Israelites by their neighbours as a kind of stigma; even as we remember to have read in Harris's *Collection of Travels,* that when the English and Dutch were competing for power and influence in the East, the English, in order to damage their rivals, industriously circulated the dangerous secret that the Dutch had no king. The Oriental mind was astonished and perplexed by the indication of a condition so utterly beyond the scope of its experience and comprehension, and the Dutch, alarmed for the effect of this slur upon their respectability, stoutly repelled the charge as an infamous calumny, affirming that they had a very great king, thus exalting for the nonce their stadtholder to that high rank.[e]

6—9. (6) **displeased,** marg. *was evil in the sight of.* (7) **rejected me,** as the king under the theocracy. **reign,** directly over them. (8) repeated declensions proved the people unfit for so high an idea as that of the *immediate government of God.* So He graciously condescended to meet their ability by a lower provision. (9) **manner,**[a] law, or chief features.

Israel's king.—I. The king possessed. (1) They already had a king, the great God; (2) He ruled in mercy and justice; (3) He governed Israel by means of His servants, the judges (Samuel, etc.), priests, etc.; (4) He led them to victory and deliverance and prosperity; (5) He was rejected by them. II. The king demanded. (1) It is curious that they should demand a king of Samuel. Although they had resolved to have one, they (*a*) could not agree as to the mode of his election: (*b*) as to the person to be elected; (*c*) nor to have one without the Divine sanction; (2) The king they wished to have was a creation of their own fancy: a being possessed of heroic qualities of person and mind; at any rate, a visible representation of royalty; (3) The reason why they demanded a king was that they were tired of the righteous rule of God; (4) The excuse they offered was that they might be as other nations. III. The king granted. (1) One after their own heart; (2) One whose character and policy were previously described; (3) Such a king was granted that the people might learn the folly of which they were guilty in rejecting the rule of God. Learn—(1) The folly of envying other people: what might even be suitable for them might be a positive injury to us; (2) No greater harm could happen to us than the fulfilment of some of our own desires; (3) Let us pray that God's will may be ours.[b]

Instability of kings.—

> The love of kings is like the blowing of
> Winds, which whistle sometimes gently among
> The leaves, and straightway turn the trees up by
> The roots; or fire, which warmeth afar off,
> And burneth near at hand: or the sea, which makes
> Men hoist their sails in a flattering calm,
> And to cut their masts in a rough storm. They
> Place affection by times, by policy,

By appointment; if they frown, who dares call
Them inconstant: if bewray secrets, who
Will term them untrue? if they fall to other
Loves, who trembles not, if he calls them unfaithful?[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1112.

c Johnson.

10—14. (10) **people,** who had sent the elders, *see v.* 7. (11) **for himself,** ch. xiv. 52. **chariots,** used on state occasions and for war. **run before,** outriders. Comp. Elijah, 1 Ki. xviii. 46. (12) **captains,** *etc.*, appointing a regular military and civil organisation, wh. the people will have to maintain by taxes, given in *money* or in *kind*. **ear,** old Eng. word for *to plough*. (13) **confectionaries,** to prepare delicacies for his table. **cooks,** lit. *slaughterers*.[a] (14) **fields,** illus. by 1 Ki. xxi. 7. **to his servants,** rewards for special service.

Running footmen (*v.* 11).—Chariots are not now used, but in Persia it is to this day a piece of state for the king and other great personages to have several men run on foot before and beside them, as they ride on horseback. This they do even when the rider puts his horse to a gallop. The men are trained to their business from boyhood; and the feats they are able to perform would scarcely be considered credible in this country. They are called *shatirs*. Chardin mentions a candidate for the place of *shatir* to the king, who accomplished about 120 miles by fourteen hours' unremitted running, and who was rather censured for not having done it in twelve hours. Chardin himself followed him on horseback in his seventh course, when the heat of the day had obliged him somewhat to relax his pace, and the traveller could only follow him by keeping his horse on the gallop. No instance equal to this came to our own knowledge in the same country; but what we did see and learn, rendered the statement of Chardin far from incredible. It is astonishing to observe the extreme ease with which the men appear to attend their master's horse, in all its paces, even the most rapid; and, as a general rule, it is understood that an accomplished footman ought to remain untired as long, or longer, than the horse ridden by his master.[b]

Samuel's reply to Israel's request

a "It was prob. the cook's office originally to slaughter the animal, and cut it up into joints, as well as to cook it, whence he was called *the slaughterer*."—*Spk. Com.*

"The faults of kings do shine like the fiery beacons on a hill, for all to see, and seeing tremble at. You give your subjects license to offend when you do teach them how."—*Heming.*

"We own thy virtues; but we blame thy mind elate with insolence and pride."—*Juvenal.*

b Kitto.

15—18. (15) **the tenth,** this tax would be extra to all ecclesiastical claims. One penalty of monarchy is increase of taxation. **officers,** lit. *eunuchs*, poss. indic. chamberlains, or lords of the bedchamber. (16) **young men,** Sept. has oxen, prob. correctly, as young men are referred to *v.* 11. (17) **sheep,** for daily food of his court. (18) **cry out,**[a] with alarm at his exactions.[b]

Despotism of Eastern kings.—The following anecdote, related by Mr. Fraser, will put this in a striking point of view:—"A native of Fars, some time ago, made a considerable improvement in the manufacture of porcelain. His fame quickly spread, until it reached the court, when the king immediately dispatched an order, commanding him to repair to Teheran, to make china for the Shah. Now the poor fellow knew that, once there, he should have to make china, not only for the Shah, but for all his officers and courtiers—and that, too, without the hope of any payment, unless it might be an occasional good beating. Seized with consternation, he collected as large a sum as possible, and presenting it by way of bribe to the minister, besought him to report that he was not the man that made the china, but that the real potter had run away. The business was managed accord-

a 1 Ki. xii. 4, 14, 15.

b "Sam. enumerated three evils incident to monarchical rule—impaired simplicity of life, diminished liberty of the individual subject, and increased taxation."—*Groser.*

"O diadem, thou centre of ambition, where all its different lines are reconciled, as if thou wert the burning-glass of glory."—*Dryden.*

B.C. *cir.* 1112.

Israel's request is granted

[a] Fr. the Norm. Fr. *reherser*, to harrow over again.

vv. 19—22. *J. S. M. Anderson*, ii. 300; *J. A. Müller*, *Saul* i. 18.

[b] *Hive.*

"A 11 precepts concerning kings are in effect comprehended in those two remembrances, 'Remember that thou art a man;' and 'Remember that thou art the representative of God;' the one bridleth their power, and the other their will." —*Lord Bacon.*

"The Lord, like a most bountiful king, will be angry if any man will ask a small thing at His hands; because He had rather give things of great worth than of small value. His goodness is infinite.' —*Powell.*

[c] *T. Jefferson in Harper's Monthly.*

ing to his wish, and he returned penniless to his own country, vowing never again to make a bit of china, nor to attempt an improvement of any sort as long as he lived."

19—22. (19) **we will**, they failed to apprehend the consequences: and followed out their own determinations. Self-will is ever a dangerous road. (20) They persisted in seeing only *one side* of a king's conduct. (21) **rehearsed,**[a] to go over again a second time. (22) Comp. *vv.* 7—9. **go**, *etc.*, not intimating further his intentions.

Israel's request for a king.—1. The request. For a king. To be like other nations. They were better off than other nations, if they had but known it. No one way of governing is best for every nation. Comp. America, Turkey, England. The way God designed for Israel would have worked well, if they had been true-hearted. 2. The request taken to a man; an honoured, aged, praying man, who had been judge. It seemed like putting a slight on him. The request brought by a deputation of elders. 3. The request carried to God, who was the One really affected by it. Carried by the man of prayer and the prophet. 4. The answer sent as a warning: illus. *vv.* 11—18. 5. The answer sent in a permission. This comes out in full next lesson. Learn—What mistakes we shall make all through life, if we set our wills up against God's will.[b]

A bad lot of kings.—While in Europe I often amused myself with contemplating the characters of the then reigning sovereigns of Europe. Louis XVI. was a fool, of my own knowledge, and despite of the answers made for him at his trial. The King of Spain was a fool, and of Naples the same. They passed their lives in hunting, and despatched two couriers a week one thousand miles, to let each know what game they had killed the preceding days. The King of Sardinia was a fool. All these were Bourbons. The Queen of Portugal, a Braganza, was an idiot by nature; and so was the King of Denmark. Their sons, as regents, exercised the powers of government. The King of Prussia, successor to the great Frederick, was a mere hog in body as well as in mind. Gustavus of Sweden and Joseph of Austria were really crazy; and George of England, you know, was in a strait waistcoat. There remained then none but old Catherine, who had been too lately picked up to have lost her common sense. In this state Bonaparte found Europe, and it was this state of its rulers which lost it with scarce a struggle. These animals had become without mind and powerless. Alexander, the grandson of Catherine, is as yet an exception. He is able to hold his own. But he is only of the third generation. His race is not yet worn out. And so endeth the book of kings, from all of whom the Lord deliver us.[c]

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1095.

the story of Saul

the search for the asses

[a] Comp. 1 Chr.

1—3. (1) **Kish**, a *bow*. **Abiel**, *strong*, father of Kish and Ner, and grandfather of Saul and Abner.[a] **Zeror**, a *bundle*, or *purse*: also *Zur*.[b] **Bechorath**, *first birth*. **Aphiah**, *refreshed*. **power**, rather of wealth.[c] (2) **Saul**, Heb. *Shâul*, *i.e.* asked for **choice**, *etc.*, young and handsome. **higher**, physical strength

and lofty stature are in all primitive nations important qualif. for leadership. (3) **asses . . lost,** had strayed away.

A trivial incident the herald of a momentous future.—(1) Saul is introduced in connection with his ancestry; (2) In connection with the meaner duties of life; (3) The light which this incident throws upon Saul's domestic character—(*a*) he was an obedient son, *v.* 3, (*b*) persevering and patient, *v.* 4, (*c*) considerate, *v.* 5; (4) Saul was somewhat indebted to the social condition of the times for his elevation.[d]

The call of the times.—"The times call forth! Alas, we have known times call loudly enough for their great man, but not find him when they called! He was not there; Providence had not sent him; the time, calling its loudest, had to go down to confusion and wreck because he would not come when called. . . . . But I liken common languid times with their embarrassed circumstances, impotently crumbling down into ever worse distress towards final ruin—all this I liken to dry dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of heaven that shall kindle it. The great man, with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning. All blazes around him now, when he has once struck on it, into fire like his own. The dry mouldering sticks are thought to have called him forth. They did want him greatly; but, as to calling him forth—! These are the critics of smaller vision, I think, who cry, 'See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?'"[e]

4–6. (4) **mount Ephraim,** north of Benjamin. **Shalisha,**[a] **land of Shalim,** a district bordering on Mt. Ephraim. (5) **Zuph,** the district round *Ramathaim Zophim*, 1 Sa. i. 1. (6) **this city,** Rama was in sight probably.[b] **honourable man,** title of rank. Obs. the general confidence felt in Samuel.

The providence of life.—I. The mysterious powers which guide our lives. These forces are twofold. i. Minor. 1. Events; 2. Persons (*v.* 6), who may be of inferior rank—a servant; and who may act unconsciously. ii. Supreme: God. 1. Their influence on prophetic life—God indicated the person (*v.* 15); the time (*v.* 15); the purpose (*v.* 16); 2. Their influence on unfolding life. A marvellous coincidence (*vv.* 18, 19); a mysterious assurance (*v.* 20); a consoling statement (*v.* 20). II. The important issues to which they tend. 1. Spiritual in their nature; 2. Social in their bearing; 3. Samuel's communications to Saul.[c]

Tallness essential to a chieftain (*see also vv.* 2 *and* 7).—The prevalence of this feeling of regard for personal bulk and stature is seen in the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria and Persia, and even in the modern paintings of the last-named nation, in which the sovereign is invested with gigantic proportions in comparison with the persons around him. . . . It appears to have been usual with the ancient Orientals, as well as with the Greeks and Romans, to choose persons to the highest office of the magistracy whose personal appearance was superior to that of others; and this is what ancient writers often take notice of, as a recommendation of them in princes. Herodotus, after recounting the numbers of men in the army of Xerxes, makes the remark that among this vast host there was not one who appeared by his comeliness and stature more worthy than he to fill the throne. The same writer also informs us that the Ethiopians deemed the man who was strongest and tallest of stature fittest to be

B.C. *cir.* 1055.

viii. 33, ix. 39, where *Ner* is spoken of as father of *Kish*.

b Comp. 1 Chr. viii. 30, ix. 36.

c "It is uncertain in what precise spot of the territory of that fierce tribe (of Benj.) the original seat of the family lay. It may have been the conical eminence amongst its central hills, known as *Gibeah of Saul*. It was more prob. the village of *Zelah*, on its extreme southern frontier, in wh. was the ancestral burial place."—*Stanley.* On cap. iv. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.; J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 251.

d J. S. Exell.

e T. Carlyle.

he fails in the search

a "The situation is wrapt in the same geographical obscurity that tracks the whole journey of Saul."—*Stanley.*

b "It is not to be inferred that the city was Samuel's residence, Rama."—*Wordsworth.*

c J. S. Exell.

"These limbs—whence had we them; this stormy force; this life-blood, with its burning passion? They are dust and shadow—a shadow-system gathered round our me; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine essence is to be revealed in the flesh."—*Carlyle.*

"We cannot

B.C. *cir.* 1095.

keep our bodies long here: they are corruptible bodies, and will tumble into dust; we must part with them for a while; and if ever we expect and desire a happy meeting again, we must use them with modesty and reverence now."—*Sherlock.*

"There are some that use humility to serve their pride, and seem humble upon their way, to be prouder at their wish'd journey's end."—*Benham.*

d Kitto.

their king. In Virgil, Turnus is another Saul, in the superiority of his person to others, whom he, by a whole head, overtops. It is not surprising that, as Quintus Curtius remarks, barbarians made part of the royal majesty consist in the outward form and goodly figure of their princes: but it does excite some surprise to hear a man so cultivated and refined as Pliny the younger naming qualities of this sort among those which entitled his hero, Trajan, to the supreme rank to which he had been elevated. There is a curious passage in Homer, where, in order to secure greater respect for Ulysses from the Phæacians, upon whose island he was cast,—

"Pallas o'er his head and shoulders broad,
Diffusing grace celestial, his whole form
Dilated, and to statelier height advanced,
That worthier of all reverence he might seem
To the Phæacians."—*Odyssey*, viii. 20, 24.

He had been before announced as—

"A wanderer o'er the deep,
But in his form majestic as a god."

This latter intimation lets us into the secret of the extraordinary estimation of stature in ancient times, among at least the Gentiles. They had a notion that such persons came nearer to the deities, and looked more like them. So Diana is described in Ovid as superior in stature to the nymphs and inferior goddesses by whom she is surrounded.[d]

he inquires of the seer

7—10. (7) bring the man, as a present,[a] not as a bribe. **bread is spent,** in such cases shepherds usually put up enough food for thirty days. (8) **fourth . . silver,**[b] rather more than sixpence. (9) **seer,** Heb. *rŏ'ĕh*, receivers of a special revelation. **prophet,** Heb. *nabi*, official name of those established to be the declarers and expounders of God's will.[c] (10) **well said,** Heb. *thy word is good.*

Lessons from the life of Saul.—I. If God wants a king, He knows where to get him. II. That obedient sons are likely to be Divinely honoured. III. The mysterious power of human association. IV. The Divine casuistry of every-day life. V. The harmonious working of Divine providence. VI. The relationship of human governments to the Divine.[d]

Presents in the East.—Of the familiar fact that no one in the East ventures to approach a superior, especially if he have any request to make, without some present, more or less, according to his degree, the following, recorded by Plutarch of the Persian king Artaxerxes Mnemon, is an interesting illustration:—"On one occasion a poor husbandman, seeing every one give the king a present of some sort or other, as he passed by them, but having nothing at hand that seemed proper to be given, ran to a stream that was near, and filling both his hands with water, came and offered it to the king, who was so gratified with the inventive spontaneity of this act of homage, that he ordered to be given to the man a thousand darics and a cup of massive gold. This same "king of kings" always received with satisfaction the smallest and most trifling gifts which evinced the zeal and attention of the offerers; and in a country where we have ourselves bought one of the finest possible pomegranates for a penny, he evinced the utmost pleasure in receiving, from a man named Romises, the finest pomegranate his garden yielded."

a "According to E. notions, it would be considered a want of respect for any person to go into the presence of a superior man of rank, or of official station, without a present of some kind in his hand, however trifling in value."—*Jamieson.*

b "Probably the shekel, like our early Eng. silver coins, was divided into four quarters by a cross, and actually subdivided when required, into half and quarter shekels."—*Spk. Com.*

c Wordsworth.

d J. S. Exell.

"However deformed, afflicted, mangled, tortured, imprisoned, enslaved, the body may be,

The offering of money, and so small a sum as sixpence, which was all that Saul gave to Samuel, would be a great affront among us. All this is different in the East, where a small sum is not less acceptable as a mark of respectful attention than its value in any other shape. . . . It is often more acceptable; and it is not uncommon for a stranger to be desired to retain his present, and give the value of it in money. This was the general practice of no less a personage than Futteh Ali Shah—not many years ago king of Persia—who when the customary presents were offered to him, would often, in his later years, ask, "What may these things be worth?" and, on being told, would answer, "Keep them, and give me the money."[e]

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it does not affect the form, nature, and duration of the soul. That maintains its identity in the condition in which nature or grace may find it."—*John Bute.*

[e] *Kitto.*

11—14. (11) **found,** better, *met.* **going out,** or coming out. **draw water,** the wells were usually outside the cities: here at the foot of the hill. (12) **came to-day,** returning from his circuit for the proposed sacrifice. **high place,**[a] a sacred eminence. (13) **straightway,** immediately. **to eat,** a festival would follow the sacrifice, at wh. the prophet's blessing was expected. (14) **into the city,** midst of the city. **came out,** of his house, not of the city gates.

Providence.—God is the pilot as well as the constructor; He holds every second cause, and every instrument, in positive subordination to His intelligent will.—An infidel was sailing upon a river; a storm arose, the man was drifted out to sea, clinging to the oars; finally he was picked up by a vessel, itself swept from its moorings, with broken cable, and in danger of wreck: thus was Vanderkemp converted.—A minister made an open-air appointment for a preaching service; some young men and boys undertook to disturb the meeting; one of the most nimble and dexterous broke his ankle in trying to kick a football into the good man's face; that laid him on his bed, and brought the preacher to see him: thus Morgan Howell was converted.—President Edwards turned from church one Lord's Day, intending to spend the time in sleep and seclusion; taking from the library at random an old book, without any name on the back, it proved to be a Bible, and he opened it to find in 1 Ti. i. 17 the instrument of his conversion.

Samuel meets him

[a] Heb. word *bamah* is applied both to idolatrous places of worship, and to those in which the true God was honoured (1 K. iii. 3).

v. 13. *Bp. Dehon,* i. 46.

"You may say, 'I wish to send this ball so as to kill the lion crouching yonder, ready to spring upon me. My wishes are all right, and I hope Providence will direct the ball.' Providence won't. You must do it; and if you do not, you are a dead man."—*Beecher.*

15—18. (15) **in his ear,**[a] Heb. *had uncovered the ear of Samuel.* (16) **anoint,** with the oil of consecration, as in appointment of priest. **save,** deliver, and keep free. (17) This *v.* follows on the account fr. *v.* 14. (18) **in the gate,** in the midst of the gate, indic. that Saul had not entered far into the city.

Unconsciously guided.—It is recorded of Mr. John Dod, that one night, at a very late hour, he felt strongly moved to visit a gentleman of his acquaintance, who lived at some distance. Not knowing what might be the design of Providence in this, he went. Having come to the house, and knocked at the door, the gentleman himself opened it; to whom Mr. Dod said, "I am come to you. I know not why myself, but I was restless in my spirit till I had done it." The gentleman replied, "You know not why you came; but God knew why He sent you." On which he pulled out the halter with which he intended to take away his own life, which, by this means, was happily prevented.

Samuel has been foreinstructed

"We are not to lead events, but to follow them."—*Epictetus.*

[a] 1 Sa. xv. 1; Ac. xiii. 21.

"Happy is the man who can endure the highest and the lowest fortune. He who has endured such vicissitudes with equanimity has deprived misfortune of its power."—*Seneca.*

19—24. (19) **eat with me,** at the festival. (20) **three days ago,** Heb. to-day three days. **desire,** or "*whose shall be*

Saul is the guest of Samuel

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a "They ascended to the hill, or high place, and in the inn, or caravanserai, at the top, found thirty guests assembled, amongst whom they took the chief seats."—*Stanley.*

"My endeavours have ever come too short of my desires."—*Shakespeare.*

Samuel shows Saul the word of God

a "During a large part of the year the roof is the most agreeable place about the establishment, especially in the morning and evening. There multitudes sleep during the summer, in all places where malaria does not render it dangerous. Saul, young, vigorous, but weary with his long search, would desire no better place to sleep in than on the roof."—*Thomson.*

"He that is without fear is without hope."—*Webster.*

b Harmer.

the delectable things of Israel? (21) The language of unaffected modesty and humility. (22) **parlour,**[a] or hall. (23) **the portion,** a boiled shoulder, fr. wh. Saul, as chief guest, was to tear off the first morsel. (24) **left,** set aside.

Humility.—Dr. Hatton, Bishop of Durham, was once travelling near Wensleydale, a mountainous district in the north of England, when he suddenly dismounted, and retired to a particular spot at some distance from the highway. He knelt there in prayer for some time, and then returned to his attendants. They were anxious to know the reason for the singular act they had just witnessed, and the bishop told them he had been presenting his thanksgiving to God for mercies received since his early days. He stated that his reason for selecting that particular spot on which to kneel was, that he had once been at that place when he was a poor barefooted boy, and had disturbed a cow that was lying there, so that he might warm his feet and legs on the place where she had lain.

25—27. (25) **top of the house,** flat, often used for private intercourse. (26) **spring,** *etc.*, as the morning arose, Ge. xix. 15. **to the top,** or poss. *on the top.* Saul's bed being made on the house-top, under an awning.[a] (27) **pass on,** to give Sam. opportunity of imparting a private communication.

Eastern house-tops (*v.* 25).—Dr. Shaw has cited this passage concerning Samuel and Saul, when mentioning the various uses to which the people of the East put the flat roofs of their houses, though without explaining it; but he has not mentioned, among the other Scriptures, that relating to Nebuchadnezzar, who is described by the prophet as walking on the roof of his palace, and taking a view of Babylon, when he fell, upon surveying that mighty city, into that haughty soliloquy which brought after it a dreadful humiliation. This is the more to be regretted, because though many have, all have not, considered the passage in this light. Our own translation, in particular, has not, but renders the words, "He walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon" (Da. iv. 29), and has thrown the other reading, "upon the palace," into the margin, as less preferable. But to those that are acquainted with Eastern customs, who recollect the passage, which Dr. Shaw, it seems, did not, there cannot be any doubt how it is to be understood. "Sur le terrasse," says Sir John Cardin, in his MS. note on this place, "pour le plaisir de la vue, pour de là considerer la ville, et pour prendre la frais, et c'est ce que prouve, le verset suivant." That is, he walked upon the terrace, for the pleasure of the prospect, to take a view of the city, and to enjoy the fresh air, which the following verse proves. Nothing can be more natural than this interpretation.[b]

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Samuel anoints Saul

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—4. (1) **vial**[a] **of oil,** for anointing as king. **kissed him,** token of homage, and act of congratulation. **captain,** ruler, deliverer, and king. No doubt, sharing in the feeling of the people, Saul at once understood the act. (2) The first of three signs given as tokens that Sam. acted by Divine commission. **Rachel's sepulchre,**[b] position is difficult to locate. If situate on the road fr. Bethel to Bethlehem, it was not in Saul's way

a From F. *viole*, G. *phiale*, a small bottle, a phial.

b Ge. xxxv. 19, 20.

c "Its meaning is rather, according

home. **Zelzah,**[e] not known, if name of a place. (3) **plain,** or *oak*, Ge. xxxv. 8. **meet thee,**[a] *etc.*, or thou shalt light upon, come up with. (4) **salute thee,** Heb. ask thee of peace.

Kish's losses.—Subject: The loss of a child occasions greater sorrow than the loss of worldly substance. I. A great loss. The asses, valuable property in the East; the loss occasioned "care," anxiety, sorrow. II. A greater loss. A son, Saul. In this great loss the other was forgotten. Learn—1. The depth of parental love; 2. The duty of filial obedience.*f*

Kissing as an act of homage (*v.* 1).—This mode of expressing homage was soon transferred to kings and men in authority. Thus Samuel saluted Saul after he had anointed him. Priam and Ulysses are represented by Homer as offering this act of adoration. In the East it was very common, especially in Persia. Xenophon, in his oration on Agesilaus, tells us that the Persians were accustomed to kiss those whom they held in honour. It was also practised towards the Roman emperor. This custom obtains now in India, and also in our own country. Both these shades of meaning may, with propriety, be considered as couched in the language of the Psalmist, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry." Drusius translates the passage, "Receive Him for your Lord and King," The meaning evidently is, "Render to Him that homage which He, as the Son of God, the anointed King on Zion, requires."

5—8. (5) **hill of God,** a proper name, *Gibeah-elohim:* poss. same as *Geba.*[a] **garrison,** or military post. **psaltery,**[b] *nebel:* first mentioned here. **tabret,** *toph*, kind of tambourine or drum. **pipe,** *chalib*, a bored or pierced instrument; kind of flute. **harp,** *cinnor*, stringed instrument, more like *lyre*, with fewer strings than the psaltery. **prophesy,** sing hymns of praise, with rapturous and extatic feeling. (6) **Spirit,** *etc.*,[c] Ju. iii. 10. (7) **as occasion,** *etc.*, *i.e.* act independently; with royal authority. (8) **Gilgal,** Jos. iv. 19.

Saul's changes.—Subject: "The transforming power of the Holy Spirit." Saul turned into another man in respect to—I. His circumstances. II. His prospects. III. His character. Learn:—1. Seek to possess the Spirit of the Lord; if He does not make you great, He will make you good; 2. Test His presence by the change produced.*d*

Providence over men and nations.—It is well known that in the year 1686 the Duke of Savoy was prevailed on by Louis XIV. to expel the Waldensian Christians from their native valleys. In 1689, eight or nine hundred of these persons, through great difficulties, returned. Dr. Calamy, in his *Life and Times*, relates that Mr. Arnauld, their minister and leader, told him that when they had nearly reached their homes, pursued by a number of enemies, they were in great danger of dying from want of provisions. Such, however, was the kindness of God to them, that a sudden thaw removed in one night a mass of snow from the fields, where they discovered a considerable quantity of wheat standing in the earth ready for the sickle, that had been suddenly covered with snow, and which now as unexpectedly left it. On this corn they lived till other sources supplied them with food.

9—13. (9) **another heart,**[a] *see v.* 6. **came to pass, for his encouragement.** (10) **to the hill,** better, to *Gibeah.* (11)

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to the Sept., something like 'hastening,' 'leaping.'"—*Ewald.*

d "The kids were for sacrifice, the loaves for the offering, and the wine for the libations."—*Jamieson.*

e Fr. Lat. *salutare*, formed from *salus*, health, safety.

v. 1. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*; *H. Lindsay, Lect.* 1. 48.

f Hive.

"He who can pay homage to the truly despicable is truly contemptible."—*Lavater.*

Samuel sends Saul to Gilgal

a 1 Sa. xiii. 3. "*Jeba*, very near *Michmash*, and north-east of Gibeah."—*Lieut. Conder.*

b "A stringed instrument, prob. in shape triangular, like a cone with the vertex downward, with 10 or 12 strings."—*Ayre.*

c "He caught the inspiration from the 'chain' of prophets, as the sign of a grander, loftier life, than he had ever before conceived."—*Stanley.*

v. 5—10. *S. Deyling, Observ.* 3.

d Hive.

Saul among the prophets

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beforetime, prev. to his anointing. (12) **who is their father?**[c] prob. more correct in Sept., *Who is his father?* Is he not the son of Kish?[c] (13) **an end,** for the time.

Conversion a ground of joy (*v.* 12).—The proverb of our text we may consider as containing—I. A subject for grateful admiration. Many are converted to God when no such change could have been hoped for, from—1. Their age; 2. Their occupations; 3. Their habits; 4. Their connections. II. A matter for prudential inquiry. How shall we know whether we are "among the prophets"? We must see whether we have—1. The mind; 2. The spirit, of the prophets.[d]

Instantaneous conversion.—When grace subdues a rebel man, if I may so speak, the citadel first is taken, afterwards the city. It is not as in those great sieges which we have lately watched with such anxious interest. There, approaching with his brigades, and cavalry, and artillery, man sits down outside the city. He begins the attack from a distance, creeping like a lion to the spring, with trench, and parallel, and battery, nearer and nearer to the walls. These at length are breached; the gates are blown open; through the deadly gap the red, living tide rolls in. Fighting from bastion to bastion, from street to street, they pass onward to the citadel; and there, giving no quarter and receiving none, beneath a defiant flag, the rebels, perhaps, stand by their guns, prolonging a desperate resistance. But, when the appointed hour of conversion comes, Christ descends by His Spirit into the heart,—at once into the heart. The heart won, she fights her way outward from a new heart on to new habits. A change without succeeds the change within.[e]

14—16. (14) **no where,** within our reach. (15) **Saul said,** uncle had observed the change in Saul, and wanted it accounted for. (16) **the kingdom,** now set up in himself.

The discipline of a promoted life.—This promoted life was—I. Unostentatious in its commencement. II. Confirmatory in its progress. Saul's future confirmed by—1. The restoration of lost property (*v.* 3); 2. The manifestation of hospitality (*v.* 4). The sympathetic power of prophecy (*v.* 6). III. Preparatory in its issue. Saul is prepared by—1. The importation of a new nature (*v.* 9); 2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit (*v.* 10).[a]

Effects of boasting (*v.* 16).—Lord Bacon told Sir Edward Cooke when he boasted, "The less you speak of your greatness, the more I shall think of it." Mirrors are the accompaniments of dandies, not heroes. The men of history were not perpetually looking in the glass to make sure of their own size. Absorbed in their work, they did it, and did it so well, that the wondering world saw them to be great, and labelled them accordingly.[b]

17—21. (17) **Mizpeh,** ch. vii. 5. (18) Throughout Scrip. constant reference is made to the *Exodus*, as the first great national event. (19) **before the Lord,** in solemn assembly, in presence of His altar. (20) **to come near,** that the Lord's choice might be indicated: poss. by lot the selection was made.[a] (21) **Matri,** *vain of Jehovah.* **not be found,** indic. of his youthful modesty.[b]

The first king of Israel.—I. The election of a king. A strange thing, because this nation had a King. One very near, very strong, very gracious, but One they could not see, One who kept

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[c] Comp. Mat. xiii. 54, 55.

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

[e] *Dr. Guthrie.*

"In many looks the false heart's history is writ, in moods, and frowns, and wrinkles strange."—*Shakespeare.*

Saul's interview with his uncle

[a] *J. S. Exell.*

"No one can take less pains than to hold his tongue. Hear much, and speak little; for the tongue is the instrument of the greatest good and the greatest evil that is done in the world."—*Sir W. Raleigh.*

[b] *S. Coley.*

Israel summoned to Mizpeh

election of king

Saul chosen

[a] Comp. Jos. vii. 14, 16—18; 1 Sa. xiv. 41.

[b] *Wordsworth.*

no earthly court. Election conducted in a strange way. This no hereditary monarchy; nor was the election by vote or show of hands, but by lot, which meant leaving the choice to the great unseen King, whose reign did not satisfy them. II. The king elected. Already found by the prophet and anointed. Now modestly hiding, now fetched out, a grand-looking man; but he proved a failure. He was a man quite after the people's heart; not like David—a man after God's own heart.[c]

A king.—

Show wond'ring nations what a monarch should be;
Heaven's true vicegerent, whose superior soul,
Raised high above the tyrant's selfish poorness,
Pants but for power of doing good, rejects
All power of doing ill; who makes no war
But to revenge his people's wrongs; no peace
But what secures their safety; courts no fame
But from their happiness: a parent he,
The public parent; they not slaves, but sons.[d]

B.C. *cir.* 1095.

c Hive.

"A king that would not feel his crown too heavy for him, must wear it every day; but if he think it too light, he knoweth not of what metal it is made."—*Bacon.*

"My heart being virtuous, let my face be wen, I am to God, I only seem to man."—*Quarles.*

d Mallet.

22—25. (22) **stuff,**[a] the baggage of the people who had come to *Mizpeh.* (23) **shoulders higher,** ch. ix. 2. (24) **God save,** lit. *let the king live.* (25) **the manner,** law or principles. **laid up,** *etc.*, placed beside the ark of the covenant with the copy of the law.

The duty of prayer for the sovereign (*v.* 24).—I. The prayer, "God save the king." This implies that we supplicate God—1. That our sovereign may maintain God's laws and seek His honour; 2. That she may be strong and courageous; 3. To take her under His protection; 4. To bless and keep her always. II. The motives we have to animate us to perform this sacred duty. 1. Consider in what a deplorable condition, as a nation, we should be if we had no sovereign to reign over us; 2. This duty is sanctioned and enforced by the practice of all civilised nations; 3. Since the moral responsibility of rulers is so great, what powerful claims has our sovereign to our generous sympathy and to our prayers! Conclusion:—(1) Adore God for all His goodness to us as a nation; (2) Let us not forget our obligations to our heavenly Sovereign.[b]

Saul found; and the people cry God save the king

a "The assembly was like a camp, and the baggage (*impedimenta*) of the whole congregation was prob. collected in one place, where the waggons were arranged for protection."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 24. *A. Burnaby,* 303; *J. A. Miller, Saul,* 40.

b T. H. Horne, B.D.

"Kings are like stars—they rise and set — they have the worship of the world, but no repose." —*Shelley.*

"A king ruleth as he ought, a tyrant as he lists; a king to the profit of all, a tyrant to please a few."—*Aristotle.*

c Fenton.

The flattery of kings.—

The vulgar call us gods, and fondly think
That kings are cast in more than mortal moulds.
Alas! they little know that when the mind
Is cloy'd with pomp, our taste is pall'd to joy,
But grows more sensible of grief or pain.
The stupid peasant, with as quick a sense,
Enjoys the fragrance of the rose as I;
And his hard hand is proof against the thorn
Which, rankling in my tender skin, would seem
A viper's tooth. O blissful poverty!
Nature, too partial to thy lot, assigns
Health, freedom, innocence, and downy peace—
Her real goods—and only mocks the great
With empty pageantries.[c]

26, 27. (26) **home to Gibeah,** *vv.* 5, 10. **band of men, *the valiant company.*** (27) **children of Belial,** De. xiii. 13.

Saul and the band of good men

B.C. *cir.* 1095.

[a] "Another sign of his modesty, patience and prudence at this time." — *Wordsworth.*

vv. 26, 27. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 62

[b] *Hive.*

"Wise kings have generally wise councillors, as he must be a wise man himself who is capable of distinguishing one."—*Diogenes.*

There are many who would sooner meet their bitterest enemy in the field than their own hearts in the closet.

presents, *minchah,* token of homage and allegiance. **held his peace,** *lit.* was as deaf.[a]

A young man's best companions (*v.* 26).—A young man's best companions are men whose heart God has touched. When God touches the heart He makes it—I. Loving: hence they are united, "a band." II. Faithful: they were true when others despised him (*v.* 27). III. Kind: they went home with him for company and safety. Learn:—Seek for friends those whose hearts God has touched.[b]

Companions.—The following beautiful allegory is translated from the German:—Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not suffer even his grown-up sons and daughters to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright. "Dear father," said the gentle Eulalia to him one day, when he forbade her, in company with her brother, to visit the volatile Lucinda, "dear father, you must think us very childish, if you imagine that we should be exposed to danger by it." The father took in silence a dead coal from the hearth, and reached it to his daughter. "It will not burn you, my child, take it." Eulalia did so, and behold her beautiful white hand was soiled and blackened, and, as it chanced, her white dress also. "We cannot be too careful in handling coals," said Eulalia, in vexation. "Yes, truly," said the father; "you see, my child, that coals, even if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the vicious."

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Nahash besieges Jabesh-gilead

[a] "The Ammonites had long claimed the right of original possession in Gilead."—*Jamieson.* Ju. xi. 4, 12, 28.

[b] "The left eye would be covered by the shield in battle; the right eye was needed for aiming the spear. they would therefore be no better than blind if they lost their right eye." — *Wordsworth.*

"Cruelty and fear shake hands toge her."—*Balzac.*

men from Jabesh come to Saul

[a] "He was a true Benjamite from

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **Nahash,** *serpent,* a name frequently found. **Jabesh-gilead,**[a] the metropolis of Gilead, Ju. xxi. 8—14. (2) **thrust out,**[b] dig out. Nahash supposed they were wholly in his power. (3) **all the coasts,** *etc.,* not directly to Saul, but to the various tribes. Saul's kingdom not yet fully recognised.

The tender mercies of the wicked.—I. The world's covenant with its allies is one-sided. II. The world would deprive of sight those who serve it. It would pluck out the eye of intelligence, and conscience, and faith. III. One cannot serve the world with his eyes open. IV. The world's demands prove it cannot endure inspection. V. Those who fight for the world are men who have lost their sight. VI. Since there is One who will save us—and not only spare our eyes, but perfect their vision—there is no need that we should serve the world.

Putting out the right eyes (*v.* 2).—The object of Nahash was, doubtless, to make the men of Jabesh useless for war, by putting out the right eyes; the reason of this will appear, when we remember that the soldier of those days held his shield before him with his left hand while he fought with his right. The shield, consequently, hid the left eye, so that the right one only was available in war. Had he only a left eye, the shield would be useless, and the means of defence would be lost.

4—7. (4) **told the tidings,** to the people, not to Saul. (5) **after the herd,** or oxen, with which, though a king, he had been ploughing. (6) **spirit . . him,** comp. ch. x. 6, 10, as a spirit of zeal, energy, and power. **anger,** fervour of indignation. (7) Comp. Ju. xix. 29.[a]

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Be angry and sin not.—I. This anger of Saul was Divinely kindled. II. It was occasioned by the cause of humanity and patriotism. III. It did not vapour itself away in idle words. IV. The cause of the oppressed may well stir our righteous indignation. V. Oppressed nationalities, slaves, etc., may be reckoned as those whose eyes are threatened.

Anger without sin.—One of the late Dr. Spencer's parishioners in Brooklyn, New York, met him hurriedly urging his way down the street one day; his lip was set, and there was something strange in that grey eye. "How are you to-day, doctor?" he said, pleasantly. He waked as from a dream, and replied soberly, "I am mad!" It was a new word for a mild, true-hearted Christian: but he waited, and, with a deep, earnest voice, went on: "I found a widow, standing by her goods thrown in the street; she could not pay the month's rent; the landlord turned her out; and one of her children is going to die; and that man is a member of the church! I told her to take her things back again. I am on my way to see him!"

first to last. The Spirit of God came upon him as upon Samson. His shy retiring nature was shed. His anger flamed out."—*Stanley.*

v. 4. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 269. "When anger rushes unrestrained to action, like a hot steed it stumbles in its way; the man of thought strikes deepest, and strikes fastest."—*R. Savage.*

8–11. (8) **Bezek**, Ju. i. 4, 5, nearly opposite the ford for crossing to Jabesh-Gilead. Obs. in this *v.* the distinction of Israel and Judah. (9) **sun be hot**, before mid-day. The distance to travel was some 20 miles. (10) **said**, to Nahash. (11) **the morrow**, prob. the last of the seven days' respite, *v.* 3. **three companies**, as Gideon, Ju. vii. 16–19. **midst of the host**, which had gone forth to meet the sally of the men of Jabesh, and so quite closed round.

Saul defeats Nahash

"If I boast of aught, be it to have been heaven's happy instrument, the means of good to all my fellow-creatures: this is a king's best praise."—*Rowe.*

Ye shall have help.—I. This promise of help was prompt. II. It infused joy in the hearts of threatened and endangered men. III. It was fully kept. IV. For us, also, help is laid on One who is mighty to save.

Protestations of kings.—

> "'Tis true I am a king,
> Honour and glory, too, have been my aim;
> But though I dare face death and all the dangers
> Which furious war wears in its bloody front,
> Yet could I choose to fix my name by peace,
> By justice, and by mercy, and to raise
> My trophies on the blessings of mankind:
> Nor would I buy the empire of the world
> With ruin of the people whom I sway,
> Or forfeit of my honour.[a]

"In general, indulgence for those we know is rarer than pity for those we know not."—*Rivarol.*

a Young.

"Trust him with little who, without proofs, trusts you with everything, or, when he has proved you, with nothing."—*Lavater.*

12–15. (12) **that said**, ch. x. 27. Saul's authority was now established. (13) **not . . death**, instance of restraint, and moderation, showing good judgment. (14) **Gilgal**, difficult to decide always wh. Gilgal is meant.[a] (15) **made Saul king**, by general acknowledgment, by making him assume royal state and authority, and poss. by a second anointing.[b]

Saul is made king at Gilgal

a Stanley says Gilgal by Jericho, so *Wordsworth; Keil* says Jiljulia, as being near the road fr. Jabesh to Gibeah and Ramah.

b Spk. Com.

The renewal (*v.* 14).—Let us see—I. What should be renewed. 1. Our personal consecration to God; 2. A devotion of our means and powers in God's service; 3. An arrangement of our time and opportunities to the best things; 4. An awakening to our responsibilities. II. The spirit in which it should be done. 1. Reverential acknowledgment to God; 2. Joyful gratitude for the past; 3. Humble reliance on the Divine blessing. III. The reasons for doing it. 1. We need this renewing in body and mind

vv. 12, 13. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 76.

"A sovereign's

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great example forms a people; the public breast is noble, or is vile, as he inspires it."—*Maltbie.*

c *Dr. J. Burns.* "What is a king? a man condemn'd to bear the public burthen of the nation's care."—*Prior.* Our fallen nature is not what we think it to be, but what Scripture reveals it to be.

even daily; 2. We shall be the better for it; 3. We shall be more efficient in the spheres of life; 4. God will be more glorified; 5. We shall be more conformed to Christ.[c]

Henry the Fourth of France.—When Henry IV. of France was advised to attempt taking Paris by assault, before the king of Spain's troops arrived to succour the leaguers, he absolutely protested against the measure, on the principle of humanity. "I will not," said he, "expose the capital to the miseries and horrors which must follow such an event. I am the father of my people, and will follow the example of the true mother who presented herself before Solomon. I had much rather not have Paris than obtain it at the expense of humanity, and by the blood and death of so many innocent persons." Henry reduced the city to obedience without the loss of blood, except two or three burgesses who were killed. "If it was in my power," said this humane monarch, "I would give fifty thousand crowns to redeem those citizens, to have the satisfaction of informing posterity that I had subdued Paris without spilling a drop of blood."

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

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Samuel's address to Israel

he vindicates himself

1—5. (1) **Samuel said,** at close of the convention at Gilgal, ch. xi. 14, 15. **ye said,** ch. viii. 4—6. (2) **sons are with you,** their age proved his great age. Poss. intended to intimate that he had not tried to establish his family in the government.[a] *See* ch. viii. 1—3. (3) **His anointed,**[b] Saul, who had been privately anointed by Sam., and perhaps also publicly at Gilgal. **whose ox,** *etc.*,[c] demand for careful review of his public life. **bribe,** Heb. ransom;[d] the fine paid by a criminal in lieu of bonds or death.[e] **restore,** Lu. xix. 8. (4) **taken ought,** improperly. (5) **witness,**[f] that Sam. had given no cause for casting off the order of judges.

Here I am (*v.* 3).—I. Let us consider a few of the things of which this "Here I am" may remind us. 1. Honesty an important element in the strength and beauty of old age; 2. Moral courage inspired by conscious integrity; 3. It is sometimes needful to be self-assertive. This not to be confounded with vain boasting. II. Let us inquire how it was that in his old age Samuel could so fearlessly look the world in the face and say, "Here I am." It was because, in his youth, he had responded to the Divine call with "Here I am." The boy was father to the man.

Vindication of character.—A Christian is called to refrain from some things which, though actually right, yet will not bear a good appearance to all men. I once judged it my duty to refuse a considerable sum of money, which I might lawfully and fairly have received, because I considered that my account of the matter could not be stated to some, to whom a different representation would be made. A man who intends to stand immaculate, and, like Samuel, to come forward and say, Whose ox or whose ass have I taken? must count the cost. I knew that my character was worth more to me than this sum of money. By probity a man honours himself. It is the part of a wise man to waive the present good for the future increase. A merchant suffers a large quantity of goods to go out of the kingdom to a foreign land, but he has his object in doing so; he knows, by

a "They are private persons and subjects of the king, as you are."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ps. lxxxiv. 9.

c Nu. xvi. 15; Ac. xx. 33; 1 Ki. ii. 5.

d "*Copher*, ransom or satisfaction; fr. *caphar*, to cover, to pardon."—*Gesenius.*

e "Applied to the bribe paid to an unjust judge to induce him to acquit the guilty."—*Spk. Com.*

f Ac. xxiv. 16, 20; 1 Ki. ii. 10.

r. 3. *Bp. Sanderson Ss.* 6:5; *J. Gilbert, Ss.* 77; *Dr. T. Coney, Ss.* ii. 371; *Dr. R. Burn, Ss.* iv. 372; *Dr. G. D'Oyly,* ii. 360.

calculation, that he shall make so much more advantage by them. A Christian is made a wise man by counting the cost. The best picture I know of the exercise of this virtue drawn by the hand of man is that by John Bunyan, in the characters of Passion and Patience.[g]

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g R. Cecil.

6—11. (6) **it is the Lord,**[a] lifting their thoughts fr. the instruments to the real Author. **advanced,** appointed. (7) **stand still,** or stand up, as in a court of justice. **righteous acts,** with idea of *benefits*. (8) Ge. xlvi. 5, 6; Ex. iv. 16, etc. (9) **Sisera,** Ju. iv. 2. **Philistines,** Ju. xiii. 1. **king of Moab,** Ju. iii. 12. (10) **Baalim and Ashtaroth,** Ju. ii. 13, x. 10. (11) **Jerubbaal,** Ju. vii. 1. **Bedan,** either *Barak*[b] or *Abdon*.[c] **Jephthah,** Ju. xi. 1. **Samuel,**[d] prob. *Samson,* see Heb. xi. 32.

he rehearses the ways of God

a Mic. vi. 4.

b Keil; Spk. Com.

c Ewald.

d Wordsworth prefers retaining the name Samuel, and explains that he is here not recounting what he did in his own strength, but what God did by him.

The people's attitude and the preacher's duty (*v.* 7).—I. The people's attitude: "Stand still." In other words—1. Be attentive; 2. Be considerate; 3. Be reverential. II. The preacher's duty to reason, etc. 1. His method—to reason: *i.e.* to discourse, to relate in order, to apply to the conscience; 2. His subject: "the righteous acts of the Lord." People apt to forget them: rightly considered they should lead to repentance. They show God's goodness, and willingness to impart still greater mercy.

v. 7. *J. Strype, A Ser.* 1689; also *Bp. Peploe, Dr. J. Burton, W. Harper, W. F. Hook, A Ser.* each.

A king reproved.—It is said that Henry the Great of France took much pleasure in conversing with an honest and religious man of low station in life, who used great freedom with his majesty. One day he said to the king, "Sire, I always take your part when I hear any man speaking evil of you. I know that you excel in justice and generosity, and that many worthy things have been done by you. But you have one vice for which God will condemn you, if you do not repent. I mean the unlawful love of women." The king, it is said, was too magnanimous to resent this reproof, but he long felt it like an arrow in his bosom; and sometimes said that the most eloquent discourses of the doctors of the Sorbonne had never made such an impression on his soul as this honest reproof from his humble friend.

"The memory of past favours is like a rainbow, bright, vivid, and beautiful; but it soon fades away. The memory of injuries is engraved on the heart, and remains for ever." —*Haliburton.*

12—15. (12) **Nahash,** ch. xi. 1. (13) **behold the king,** Saul being present at the convention. **ye have chosen,** *etc.,* Sam. throws the whole burden of responsibility *on them.* **set a king,**[a] in response to your wish. (14) **continue following,** Heb. *be after, belong to the party of Jehovah.* (15) **hand of the Lord,** Ex. ix. 3.

he calls to obedience

a Hos. xiii. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 29.

The two courses (*vv.* 14, 15).—Samuel here places before the people two courses. I. One of which they were bound to follow. There was no middle course. Man cannot be neutral. II. We have the results of obedience and of disobedience set clearly forth. III. Such a presenting of the truth should bring us to immediate decision.

vv. 14, 15. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.*, i. 418.

Devotion to the service of God.—There was an age of chivalry, when no craven courted knighthood, for it involved the hard blows, the dangerous wounds, the rough unhorsings, and the ungentle perils of the tournament; nay, these were but child's play: there were distant Eastern fields, where Paynim warriors must be slain by valiant hands, and blood must flow in rivers from the Red-cross knights. Then men who lacked valour preferred their hawks and their jesters, and left heroes to court

Truth to be impressed:—If any person, or any nation, is to be prosperous and happy, he must maintain allegiance to God, and devote himself wholly to His service. This illustrate from the previous history and experience of Israel; from the life and integrity of Samuel; from the future history

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of the nation of Israel under the kings. Comp. such reigns as those of Ahab and Hezekiah; from recent cases met with in teacher's own experience; or in Christian biographies.

b Spurgeon.

he confirms his words by a miracle

a "This season in Pales. occurs at the end of June or beginning of July, when it seldom or never rains, and the sky is serene and cloudless." — *Jamieson.*

b Thunder is called the voice of the Lord. See Ex. ix. 28, marg.; Ps. xxix. 3–9.

c C. Simeon. M.A. vv. 16, 17. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 480; *W. Reading, A.M.*, i. 330.

v. 17. *Bp. Heber*, ii. 67.

vv. 17—19. *Dr. M. Hole, On. Lit.* ii. 7.

d Shakespeare.

he asserts God's faithfulness

a Jer. xv. 1.

b Jos. xxiv. 20.

v. 20. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*; *Dr. J. Preston*, 125.

vv. 20—25 *J. Alting, Opera* ii. pt. 2, 11.

v. 21. *T. Bolton*, ix. 500.

v. 23. *J. Keble*, 127.

c C. Vince.

vv 23, 24. *Abp. Sandys*, 34; *Dr. A. Stebbing*, ii. 344.

vv. 24, 25. *Bp. Hall, Wks.* v. 79;

death and glory on the battle-field. This genial time of peace breeds carpet knights, who flourish their untried weapons, and bear the insignia of valour, without incurring its inconvenient toils. Many are crowding to the seats of the heroes, since prowess and patience are no more required. It is not otherwise to-day. Into the triumphs of martyrs and confessors few are unwilling to enter; in a national respect to religion, which is the result of their holiness, even ungodly men are willing to share. They have gone before us with true hearts valiant for truth, and false traitors are willing to divide their spoils.[b]

16—19. (16) **stand and see,** notice, attend to. **great thing,** sign Sam. was about to give. (17) **wheat harvest,** usually a time of drought.[a] **thunder**[b] **and rain,** people greatly terrified by the thunder, and distressed by the rain, and so made to feel what power to punish rebellion was in the hands of God. (18) Comp. Ex. xiv. 31. (19) **pray for,** one of Sam.'s characteristics was power in prayer. Obs. how readily the people were affected to *penitence*, but it seldom lasted long, or fruitened in stedfast goodness.

The Israelites' rejection of Samuel reproved (*vv.* 16—23).—Notice, from the words of our text—I. The sin committed. The Israelites desired to have a king. II. The reproof administered. 1. Samuel desired a judgment from God, with a view to their humiliation; 2. He proclaimed mercy from God with a view to their encouragement.[c]

Appalling aspect of a storm.—

I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks; and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds:
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.[d]

20—25. (20) **ye have done,** Sam. deepens the sense of sin, but shows how graciously God was overruling their error. All depended on their faithfulness to God under the new constitution. (21) **vain things,** *lit.* emptiness. In Bib. language all sin is also foolishness and vanity. (22) **not forsake,** even in this their wilfulness. (23) **ceasing to pray,**[a] if God does not forsake, good men need not. (24) **how great things,** marg. *what a great thing*, referring to the gift of king. (25) **consumed,**[b] as illus. by the thunder and rain.

The farewell counsel of Samuel (*vv.* 20, 24, 25).—In his farewell address, Samuel adapted his counsels and encouragement to the special position and need of his audience. There were words of —I. Wise caution to people who had made great changes in their circumstances. Note the perfect soundness of the principle embodied in Samuel's words. II. Gracious hope to people who had erred and sinned in relation to their circumstances.[c]—*Tender and faithful rebuke* (*vv.* 20—25).—From this passage of Scripture we may learn—I. To watch the sinner's disposition to return from his evil way. II. To bear a faithful testimony against idolatry and vanity of every kind. While Samuel gives every possible

encouragement to returning sinners, he bears a faithful testimony against sin. III. While reproving sinners, we must hold out encouragement to them; we must learn to indulge a gracious hope of their returning to a gracious God. IV. To warn the impenitent. V. To give weight to our counsel by our character.[d]

Every one can pray.—Several children of a family were once playing in a garden, when one of them fell into a tank. Immediately there was great excitement, as each one hurried here and there to obtain means to extricate this brother. When the father afterwards heard of it, he called them together, and asked what means they thought of to rescue their brother from his perilous situation. The eldest said, "I fetched a rope, father, to throw to him;" the second said, "I brought a ladder to throw into the water in case the rope should not do." After inquiring of the others till he came to the youngest, he said, "And, John, what did you do to rescue your brother?" John answered, "Father, what could I do? I am so young I could not do anything. I stood on the bank of the tank, and cried as loud as I could." Now, if each cannot bring a ladder or rope, all can cry, all can plead with God to pity poor idolaters and those who know Him not. Long ago a missionary to the Indians said, "Pains and prayer, by faith in Jesus Christ, can do anything."

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Dr. T. Taylor, Wks. 573; *Bp. Stillingfleet*, ii. 174; *Dr. Munkhouse*, iii. 231; *W. Joy*, ii. 270; *Dr. W. Lupton*, 327; *Sir A. Gordon*, ii. 271; *J. S. M. Anderson, Cloud of Wit.* ii. 323.

d R. Cecil, M.A. "Let the day have a blessed baptism by giving your first waking thoughts into the bosom of God. The first hour of the morning is the rudder of the day."—*Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

the reign of Saul

1—4. (1) **reigned one year,** *lit.* as marg., *the son of one year in his reigning.* The Heb. Rabbis explain this to mean, he was quite a child in simplicity when he began to reign. Others suppose that a letter signifying 20 years has fallen out of the text, wh. is intended to give the whole length of Saul's reign.[a] (2) **chose,** *etc.*, to form a private body-guard. **Michmash,** now a desolate village. *Mukhmas*, near a steep ravine, called *Wady-es-Suweinit*, 9 m. N. of Jerus.[b] **Mount Bethel,** *Beitin*: 6 m. N.W. of Michmash. **Gibeah,** now Tuleil-el-Phûl. (3) **Geba,** now *Jeba*, on S. side of Wady-Suweinit.[c] (4) **Gilgal,** Jos. iv. 19, 20.

Israel summoned to Gilgal

The trumpet blown in Israel (*v.* 3).—I. The occasion of the sounding of this trumpet. II. The purpose for which it was blown. 1. To inspire courage; 2. To spread good tidings; 3. To lead Israel to the attack. III. The effect of the sounding of the trumpet (*v.* 4). IV. The Gospel trumpet now calls.

Armaments.—I am disposed to dissent from that maxim which has been so generally received, that "If you wish for peace, you must be prepared for war." It may have applied to the nations of antiquity, and to society in a comparatively barbarous and uncivilised state, when warlike preparations cost but little; but in the state of society in which we live now, and when the warlike preparations of great Powers are made at an enormous expense, I say that, so far from their being any security for peace, they are directly the contrary, and tend at once to war; for it is natural that men, having adopted means they think efficient to any end, should desire to put their efficiency to the test, and to have some direct result from their labour and expense.[d]

a Keil; S. k. Com.

"The true meaning seems to be, that Saul had been publicly made king, and had reigned one year, when the events recorded in the former chap. had taken place."—*Wordsworth.*

b Robinson.

c Smith, Dict. of Bib.

On the whole cap. see *Bp. Hall, Cont.*; *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 257; *J. A. Miller, Saul*, 62.

d Ld. Aberdeen.

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the people fear—Samuel is sent for

5—10. (5) **thirty thousand,** prob. a mistake in number.[a] Comp. other numbers of chariots mentioned in Scrip., and proportion to horsemen.[b] This comparison suggests that the numb. should be 300. **Bethaven,** Josh. vii. 2. (6) **in a strait,** not having force to resist such a foe. **hide themselves,** as in Ju. vi. 2. (7) **the Hebrews,** better read as Sept. *those that crossed.* **trembling,** having little confidence. No *great* signs of God's blessing had yet attended Saul, except that recorded in ch. xi. (8) **set time,**[c] to try his patience and obedience. (9) **he offered,** not certain whether he did it himself,[d] or ordered the proper priest to do it.[e] (10) **salute him,** word as in Ge. xiv. 19, meaning simply courteous salutation.

The trial of Saul (*v.* 9).—Consider how many there are who—I. When in distress of any kind, in want of means or of necessaries, forget, like Saul, that their distress, whatever it is comes from God; and that He will remove it in His own way, if they trust in Him: but who, instead of waiting for His time, take their own bad way, and impatiently hasten the time, and thus bring on themselves judgment. II. When in unpleasant situations, are tempted to do what is wrong in order to get out of them, instead of patiently waiting God's time. III. Though their hearts are not right before God, yet have some sort of religiousness, and by it deceive themselves into an idea that they are religious. IV. Who bear half the trial God puts on them, but not the whole of it; who go on well for a time and then fall away. V. Who, in a narrow, grudging, cold-hearted way, go by the letter of God's commandments while they neglect the spirit.[f]

Military glory.—I hear superficial remarks made about military surprises, the capture of capitals, and the brilliancy and celerity with which results which are not expected or contemplated, may be brought about. In the last century such melodramic catastrophes were frequent and effective: we live in an age animated by a very different spirit. I think a great country like France, and a great country like Prussia, cannot be ultimately affected by such results; and the sovereign who trusts to them will find at the moment of action that he has to encounter, wherever he may be placed, a greater and more powerful force than any military array, and that is the outraged opinion of an enlightened world.[g]

Samuel reproves Saul, and predicts his rejection

11—16. (11) **what,** *etc.*,[a] calling Saul to serious consideration of his act. (12) **I forced myself,** went against my judgment, pressed by the emergency. (13) **foolishly,** showed himself unable to *wait*, trusting in God. Wilfulness was Saul's great sin. (14) First hint of Saul's rejection.[b] (15) **up,** Gibeah being in the hill country. (16) **Jonathan,** *v.* 3.

Saul's impatience (*vv.* 11—13).—To understand exactly wherein Saul's conduct was exceptionable, we will show—I. How far it was good and commendable. He did well in that—1. He dared not to encounter his adversaries till he had implored help from God; 2. He sought after God in the ordinances of God's own appointment. II. In what respects it was foolish and blameworthy. His crime consisted in—1. His unbelieving precipitancy, in curtailing the appointed time; 2. His unwarranted dependence on a merely ritual observance. Learn—(1) Not to account any sin light; (2) Wherein true wisdom consists.[c]

The man after God's own heart.—"Those persons who gather

a Sheloshim, thirty, has crept into the text, instead of *Shelosh,* three.

b Ex. xiv. 7; Ju. iv. 3; 2 Sa. x. 18; 1 Ki. x. 26; 2 Ch. xii. 3, xiv. 9; Ps. lxviii. 17.

c 1 Sa x. 8.

d The idea that he usurped the priest's office is taken by *Josephus, Bp. Andrewes, Kitto,* etc. *Stanley* claims for him the right to sacrifice as king.

e Keil, Wordsworth, Spk. Com., etc.

f v. 9. *The Trial of Saul, Pl. Ss.* v. 188.

g J. H. Newman, B.D.

"Real glory springs from the silent conquest of ourselves; and without that the conqueror is nought but the first slave."—*Thomson.*

a Ge. iii. 13.

b 1 Sa. xv. 28.

v. 13. *T. Gisborne,* ii 299.

vv. 13, 14. *W. Reading,* iii. 380; *H. Lindsay,* i. 108; *Ld. A. Hervey,* ii. 95.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 14. *Bp. Cleaver,* 375; *Bp. Porteus,* iii. 99; *Dr. G. D'Oyly,* i. 291; *Bp. Shuttleworth,* i.

up the great faults and sins of David's private life—his craft and falsehood, his anger and revenge, his adultery and murder—in order to ask with derision and contempt, 'Is this the man after God's own heart?' are quite beside the mark, missing altogether the spirit and intention of the passage they are so ready to pervert. When the prophet Samuel uttered that much-abused sentence (1 Sa. xiii. 14), it was in immediate connection with one that condemned the disobedience of Saul, and it therefore predicted a successor whose policy and administration should be in direct opposition to those of this king. It had, therefore, little to do with the private character of David, and only commended that course of public policy which maintained inviolate all the great maxims of the theocratic government."[d]

17—23. (17) **spoilers,** same word used of destroying angel, Ex. xii. 23. **Ophrah,** in a northerly direction, 5 m. E. of Bethel.[a] **Shual,** foxland: prob. Shalim.[b] (18) **Bethhoron,**[c] westward. **Zeboim,** eastward: a town of Benjamin gave name to this valley. **wilderness,** valley of Jordan. (19) **no smith,** to make or to sharpen weapons.[d] (20) These were agricultural implements, not weapons. **coulter,** kind of ploughshare. **mattock,** kind of spade.[e] (21) **a file,**[f] poss. something answering to our *scythe-stone.* (22) **day of battle,** recorded in next chap. (23) **garrison,** *etc.,* "sallied forth to the steep, precipitous valley now called Wady Suweinit."

Arms for war (*r.* 20).—We are engaged in a great war with the Philistines of evil. I. Every weapon within our reach must be used. Preaching, teaching, praying, giving, all must be brought into action. Rough tools may deal hard blows; killing need be done not elegantly, but effectually. II. Most of our tools want sharpening: we need quickness of perception, tact, energy, promptness; in a word, complete adaptation for the Lord's work. Practical common sense is a very scarce thing among the conductors of Christian enterprises. III. We might learn from our enemies if we would, and so make the Philistines sharpen our weapons.[g]

Making of war-weapons forbidden.—The policy of the Philistines has been imitated in modern times. "Mulei Ismael went farther towards a total reduction of these parts of Africa than his predecessors had done. Indeed, the vigorous Mulei Rashid, his brother and predecessor, laid the foundation of that absoluteness; but was cut off in the height of his vigour, his horse running away with him in so violent a manner that he dashed out his brains against a tree. But this sheriff brought multitudes of sturdy Arabs and Africans, who used to be courted by the kings of Morocco, Fez, etc., to such a pass, that it was as much as all their lives were worth to have any weapon in a whole dowar (movable village or small community) more than one knife, and that without a point, wherewith to cut the throat of any sheep or other creature when in danger of dying, lest it should *jif,* as they call it, *i.e.* die with the blood in it, and become unlawful for food."[h]—*Declining quarrels.*—I commend his discretion and valour who, walking in London streets, met a gallant, who cried to him a pretty distance beforehand, "I will have the wall!" "Yea," answered he, "and take the house too, if you can but agree with the landlord."[i]

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333; *A. Gatty,* i. 105; *H. Goodwin,* iii. 136.

A gentle heart is like fruit, which bends so low that it is at the mercy of every one who chooses to pluck it, while the harder fruit keeps out of reach.
d J. Blackburn.

the Hebrews without arms

a "Prob. now *Taxyibeh.*"—*Robinson.*

b 1 Sa. ix. 4.

c Jos. x. 10.

d Policy of the Phil. had been to disarm the inhabitants.

e "In Is. vii. 25 the word translated *mattock* is prob. a weeding hook, or hoe."—*Ayre.*

f "Word comes from *patsar,* to make blunt; so per. should be rendered, 'so that bluntness of edge came to those instruments wh. should have been sharp.'"—*Wordsworth.*

g C. H. Spurgeon.

"Our greatest glory consists not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."—*Goldsmith.*

"In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility."—*Shakespeare.*

h Morgan, Hist. of Algiers.

i T. Fuller.

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CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

the two rocks, Bozez and Seneh

1–5. (1) **Jonathan,** associated with Saul in all his wars.[a] He was called *The Gazelle* (*see* orig. of 2 Sa. i. 19). (2) **under a pomegranate,**[b] Ju. iv. 5; 1 Sa. xxii. 6. **Migron,** render a *precipice*, as the town Migron was N. of Michmash.[c] (3) **Ahiah,** either the same as Ahimelech[d] (ch. xxi. 1, xx. 9), or an elder brother of Ahimelech's. **Ichabod,** ch. iv. 21. **Lord's priest,** referring to Eli. **ephod,** Ex. xxviii. 4—35; 1 Sa. ii. 18. (4) **Bozez,** shining. **Seneh,** a tooth, poss. from *sanah*, to sharpen.[e] Two sharp jutting rocks, Seneh running S. and Bozez N. (5) **forefront,** Heb. *tooth*.

Difficult extremes (*v.* 4).—The difficult extremes of the present crisis are—I. A sceptical spirit on one hand, and a superstitious spirit on the other. Infidelity and superstition are like two rocks. II. The urgent claims of business, and the temptations of leisure. III. The danger of presumption on the one hand, and the equal danger of despondency on the other.[g]

Temptation to extremes.—If Satan cannot bring men to one extreme, he will essay to bring them to another. If he cannot bring a man to covetousness and keep his heart to the love of money, then let him beware of riot and prodigality. Is a man given to pleasure and delight, and at length is deprived of them? then let him beware the devil swallow him not up with over-much grief, as he sought to do with the incestuous person of Corinth. Doth a man come to love religion that formerly was given to looseness of life? then, if it be possible, the devil will carry him to schism and heresy. The devil cannot abide that a man should keep the mean according to God's Word (Is. xxx. 21). He would have our first parents to be gods or nobody (Ge. iii. 5). And so still he laboureth to bring a man to some extreme.[h]

Jonathan and his armour-bearer

6–10. (6) **uncircumcised,** term almost confined to the Phil.[a] **it may be,** not intended to express doubt, only dependence on the Div. will. (7) **I am with thee,** willing to follow thee anywhere. (8) **discover ourselves,** let them see us climbing the cliff. (9) Comp. Gideon's sign of fleece. (10) Jonathan had doubtless sought God in prayer, and asked Him to permit this sign.[b]

Jonathan's victory over the Philistines (*v.* 6).—We will show—I. The state to which the Israelites were reduced. The consequences of their choice of a king began now to appear. II. The means by which their deliverance was effected. From this we see that—1. God can work by the weakest means; 2. A hope of His aid should encourage our exertions; 3. Faith in Him will insure to us the victory.[c]

Sense of danger the way of safety.—At the recent great flood at Albany, where those warehouses were undermined and thrown down, one man was at the base and the other in the attic. The man at the base, being right where the danger was, saw the pressure and the wearing, and heard the grinding. He saw brick after brick, and stone after stone ground out by the sawing ice. And seeing and knowing these things, as the danger came on he could flee. But the man in his office in the attic neither

a Jn. xiv. 3, xv. 18; 1 Sa. xvii. 26, etc.
b "Jonathan's action, viewed in itself, was rash and contrary to all established rules of military discipline."—*Jamieson.*
c *C. Simeon. M.A.* "As thirsty men hasten to the fountain, but having quenched their thirst and filled their vessels, turn their backs upon it; so those who are beset with perils and dangers, fly to the fountain

a "The perfect type of a warrior, according to the requirements of his age: he is everywhere the first in courage, in activity, and speed; slender also, and of well-made figure."—*Ewald.*
b *Punica granatum*, belonging to the natural family of *Myrtaceæ*.
c Is. x. 28.
d *Ahiah* means *friend of Jehovah*, and *Ahimelech*, *friend of the king*, names very nearly identical.
e *Gesenius.*
f "In the valley are two hills of a conical, or rather a spherical form, having steep, rocky sides."—*Robinson.*
g *Evan. Preacher.*
h *W. Perkins.*

a *Jamieson.*
b *C. Simeon. M.A.*
c *Evan. Preacher.*

saw the danger nor believed that there was any danger, and went on summing up his profits and laying out his plans. Which of these men had the best chance of escape; the man at the bottom, who saw the danger, or the man at the top, who saw nothing and heard nothing?[d]

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of grace; but, being relieved, they despise the living water." — *Cawdray.*

d H. W. Beecher.

11—13. (11) **out of the holes,** indic. how the Phil. despised Israel, as in a military sense defenceless. (12) **come . . thing,** the language of scorn.[a] (13) **slew after him,** puts to death those Jonathan stuns.[b]

The overthrow of the boastful.—I. The Philistines were cowardly. They saw but two men, and said, "Come up to us." II. They were scornful: "We will show you a thing." III. The deep insight of Jonathan. That word, "Come," showed they were afraid. Had they said, "Stop till we come down," he had been more wary. IV. What can be expected of the boastful but defeat?

their exploit

a Comp. 1 Sa. xvii. 43, 44.

b "No sooner is he within reach of them than he strikes them down, while his companion behind him despatched those whom he had disabled." — *Ewald.*

"Sallust relates a similar occurrence in connection with scaling a castle in the Numidian war." — *Bell. Jugurth.* c. 89, 20.

"As full of peril and adventurous spirit, as to o'erwalk a current, roaring loud, on the unsteadfast footing of a spear." — *Shakespeare.*

"Our dangers and delights are near allies; from the same stem the rose and prickle rise." — *Daniel.*

c Tewksbury.

The influence of danger.—Two young men, one a Christian and the other a sceptic, travelling through Switzerland, walked along the brow of a steep cliff, conversing of the providence of God. "I should not be willing to live another day," said the Christian earnestly, "if I could not believe that the Almighty directed my steps. I have no anxiety, for I trust His unerring guidance. No circumstance is too trifling for His control." The other replied. "I can control myself. See here!" And he paused to roll a stone down the precipice. "Did the Lord direct that pebble? See this lonely tree standing so near the edge! Do you suppose God ordained it should grow just in that spot? Some traveller threw the seed. Did the Almighty declare just where it should fall and take root?" He threw one arm around a limb of the tree, and leaned against the trunk for his companion to reply. The soil began to crumble; and, before he could move, that part of the bank had fallen upon the rocks below. Only his arm around the tree, and one foot upon the stone, where it partly rested, saved his life. For an instant both travellers stood motionless. Then the Christian fell on his knees in prayer. The sceptic came and reverently knelt beside him. Silently they arose and resumed their journey. God Himself had spoken to the soul of the sceptic. He became a humble Christian and a minister of the Gospel.[c]

14—18. (14) **acre, or furrow.**[a] **yoke,** Heb. *tsemed,* signif. a pair or couple. (15) **trembling,** sudden panic, sure forerunner of defeat. It rapidly spread through the Phil. host. **very great,** marg. trembling of, or from, God. (16) **watchmen,** *etc.,* who were full in sight of Phil. camp, and could prob. even hear the tumult. **beating,** *etc.,* comp. Ju. vii. 21, 22. (17) **Saul,** who knew nothing of the adventure. see *vv.* 1, 3. (18) **ark,** prob. should be *ephod.*[b] There is no evidence that the ark had been brought from Kirjath-jearim.[c]

Saul perplexed by the panic of Philistines

a Sept. renders "with darts and stones and flints of the field."

b As LXX., and argued by *Stanley.*

c Comp. 2 Sa. vi. 2, 3.

Saul's perplexity (*v.* 18).—I. How his perplexity was excited. 1. News from the outposts brought in by scouts; 2. Noise of retreating panic-stricken foe; 3. The two heroes missing. II. How he sought to obtain relief. Sent for the ark, to inquire through the priest. Learn—1. In our perplexity inquire of God; 2. What perplexes us may be for our good.

"The Heb. is obscure. A measure of time would not be out of place, if the words could mean, 'in about half the

Primitive war.—The first conflict between man and man was

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time that a yoke of oxen draw a furrow in the field.'"—*Spk. Com.*

"As if a yoke of land were in course of being ploughed, which must beware of offering opposition to the sharp ploughshare in the middle of its work."—*Ewald.*

d Washington Irving.

"As to be perfectly just is an attribute of the Divine nature, to be so to the utmost of our abilities is the glory of man."—*Addison.*

the mere exertion of physical force, unaided by auxiliary weapons—his arm was his buckler, his fist was his mace, and a broken head the catastrophe of his encounters. The battle of unassisted strength was succeeded by the more rugged one of stones and clubs, and war assumed a sanguinary aspect. As man advanced in refinement, as his faculties expanded, and his sensibilities became more exquisite, he grew rapidly more ingenious and experienced in the art of destroying his fellow-beings. He invented a thousand devices to defend and to assault;—the helmet, the cuirass, and the buckler, the sword, the dart, and the javelin, prepared him to elude the wound, as well as to launch the blow. Still urging on in the brilliant and philanthropic career of invention, he enlarges and heightens his powers of defence and injury. The aries, the scorpia, the balista, and the catapulta, give a horror and sublimity to war, and magnify its glory by increasing its desolation. Still insatiable, though armed with machinery that seemed to reach the limits of destructive invention, and to yield a power of injury commensurate even with the desire of revenge—still deeper researches must be made in the diabolical arcana. With furious zeal he dives into the bowels of the earth; he toils midst poisonous minerals and deadly salts; the sublime discovery of gunpowder blazes upon the world; and, finally, the dreadful art of fighting by proclamation seems to endow the demon of War with ubiquity and omnipotence. This, indeed, is grand! this, indeed, marks the powers of mind, and bespeaks that endowment of reason which distinguishes us from the animals, our inferiors.[d]

the battle of Bethaven

19—23. (19) **talked,**[a] *etc.*, inquiring of him what the tumult was. **withdraw thy hand,** cease what thou art doing. In his impatience, Saul could not wait for answer or guidance fr. God. (20) **assembled,** lit. *shouted*, called to each other to haste to the battle.[b] (21) **Heb. . . time,** forced into service of Phil. as militia, or camp attendants. (22) **hid themselves,** ch. xiii. 6, 7. (23) **Bethaven,**[c] this the direction of the flight and pursuit, ch. xiii. 5.

Nothing succeeds like success (*v.* 21).—I. There are always some who are more influenced by policy than by principle. II. Such will usually be found on the side of the winning party—like these Hebrews, who are first with Philistia, but now with Israel. III. Many of these would rather be on the right side, if it only were safe. Said one to a friend who asked him to help in founding a Christian institution, "I will wait awhile, and if you succeed I will help."

Every man's sword against his fellow.—A soldier informed his minister, that he had lately met with a comrade of his who had been in the Peninsular War, and who had related to him the following anecdote:—A soldier, whom I knew when we were in Spain, a German by birth, was, with his company of the rifle corps, engaged in skirmishing with the enemy's outposts. From a sheltered position, he had an opportunity of taking aim at a detached individual, belonging to the continental auxiliaries of the French army. He fired—the enemy fell. He ran up to him, and seized his knapsack for a prey. On opening it a letter dropped out; he had the curiosity to take it up and open it. He glanced at the close of the letter, and found it was subscribed by a person of the same name as his own father. His interest was

A Christian soldier, whose term of enlistment had nearly expired, was anticipating much pleasure from rejoining his family and friends. Being reminded that he might fall first, he replied, "I know it; but, if I fall, the battle-field will only be a shorter cut to glory." In the battle of the Wilderness, he went home by the shorter way.

increased; he read the whole letter, and found that he had shot his own brother!

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24—27. (24) **distressed,** ch. xiii. 6, a conseq. of Saul's rashness. **cursed,** *etc.*, the people were made by Saul to take this vow.[a] (25) Ewald suggests should read, "the whole land was excavated by wild honey," or full of holes of wild honey. (26) **into the wood,** poss. place of rendezvous. **dropped,**[b] from the trees, or rocky ground, very enticingly. (27) **rod,** poss. his spear; he would not stop to gather it. **enlightened,** simply meaning, he was *refreshed*.

Refreshment for the faint (*vv.* 26, 27).—We have here—I. A victorious army distressed by their efforts to overthrow the enemy. II. Suitable refreshment within reach, which thirst for vengeance had caused the king they fought for to forbid them. III. The suitability of the food learned from the case of one who, ignorant of the prohibition, had eaten the honey. Learn:—God's Word and means of grace are as sources of honey to men in the battle of life. There have been times when kings have thought more of their personal power and fame than of their people's need, and have denied to their people their just right.

Honey.—Hasselquist, in the progress of his journey from Acra to Nazareth, tells us that he found "great numbers of bees bred thereabouts to the great advantage of the inhabitants." He adds, "They make their bechives, with little trouble, of clay, four feet long, and half a foot in diameter, as in Egypt; then lay ten or twelve of them, one on another, on the bare ground, and build over every ten a little roof." Mr. Maundrell, speaking of the great salt plain near Jericho, says that "in many places there was a smell of honey and wax, as strong as if he had been in an apiary." The abundance of bees that swarmed in the East may be inferred from the honey deposited in the dried remains of the lion killed by Samson. The bony cavity of the skeleton would afford them a retreat equally pleasant with the rocks and trees. It is very possible that in that hot country the bee, when not properly cared for, would seek out any hollow space, either in rocks or trees, in which to construct its comb and deposit its treasure. But we may readily imagine that the honey thus produced in the cavities of rocks and other inaccessible places would be to a large extent entirely lost. The inhabitants of the Cape pay but little attention to the hiving of bees, as the rock honey is usually preferred to that produced in the hive.

Jonathan unknowingly breaks his father's command

a "A specimen of Saul's hot, hasty, and headstrong wilfulness and imperiousness, joined to a show of zeal for the *outward forms* of religion." — *Wordsworth.*

b "In the Fch. retreat from Moscow, the soldiers observed some combs of honey on the top of a high tree, and climbed up to get it. They threw down the comb by morsels, and their comrades pounced upon it like so many famished hounds."—*Quoted in Spk. Com.*

"Bees in the E. are not, as in England, kept in hives; they are all in a wild state. The forests literally flow with honey; large combs may be seen hanging on the trees as you pass along, full of honey."—*Roberts.*

28—32. (28) **straitly,** strictly. (29) **troubled,** comp. Jos. vii. 25. (30) **much more,** Saul's injunction was unreasonable and mischievous, and prevented the reaping of the full results of Jon.'s enterprise. (31) **Aijalon,** 15 to 20 miles fr. Michmash, mod. *Yalo.*[a] (32) Further conseq. of Saul's foolish injunction: desperate hunger led to ravenous feeding in sinful ways.[b]

Too much governed (*v.* 32).—We have here related the consequences of injudicious restraints. I. Why they were imposed (*v.* 24). An arbitrary law framed by the whim or pride of one. II. Effect of the imposition. People's natural appetite so roused by a long fast that they took food at length regardless of the law of God. Learn—1. People, children, servants may be too much governed; 2. Rigid human rules may lead to violation of moral law, etc.

v. 24. *J. A. Miller, Saul* 85.

the people transgress

a Robinson.

b Le. vii. 26, 27.

"The surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the

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spark shall come that shall set it on fire."—*Bacon.*

"Of all the difficulties in a state, the temper of a true government most facilities and perpetuates it; too sudden alterations distemper it. Had Nero tuned his kingdom as he did his harp, his harmony had been more honourable, and his reign more prosperous."—*Quarles.*

c Combe.

"Intellectually as politically, the direction of all true progress is towards greater freedom, and a long and endless succession of ideas."—*Bovee.*

Saul builds an altar

a Comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 24.

"Government began in tyranny and force, began in the feudalism of the soldier and bigotry of the priest; and the ideas of justice and humanity have been fighting their way, like a thunder-storm, against the organised selfishness of human nature." — *Wendell Phillips.*

"The power is detested, and miserable is the life of him who wishes rather to be feared than loved." — *Cornelius Nepos.*

"Society is well governed when the people obey the magistrates, and the magistrates obey the laws."—*Publius Syrus.*

The ignorant use of compulsion.—Force is the agent which ignorance uses for making his followers do the actions to which they are disinclined by nature; and, like an attempt to make water ascend above its level, the moment the agent ceases to act, the same instant does the operation cease. Persuasion, on the other hand, is like a cut made for the stream, which has only to be introduced, and it then continues to run of its own accord, without further attention. There are only two ways of directing the operations of human nature: the one to secure the inclination by convincing the judgment; and the other, to force or drive the individual against his judgment or inclinations. The one method is recommended by experience, and followed by success; the other is recommended by ignorance, and attended by disappointment. When a child cries for a rattle, it is with a view of obtaining it by force. When parents beat their children, it is to make them behave well by force. When a drunken husband strikes his wife, it is with the view of improving her by force. When a criminal is punished, it is with a view of improving the world by force. When an individual sues another at law, it is with the view of making him do justice by force. When a minister of religion dwells upon the horrors of the infernal regions, it is with the view of sending his hearers to heaven by force. When one nation goes to war with another, it is with a view of gaining some favourite point by force. Though every human being wishes for success, yet ignorance has been completely successful hitherto in leading the world to follow the course which leads to disappointment.*c*

33—35. (33) **sin,** comp. Ge. ix. 4. **transgressed,** marg. *dealt treacherously.* **roll a great stone,** for slaughtering on. **this day,** immediately. (34) **slay them here,** under my supervision. (35) **built an altar,** this stone forming a part of it. The mtm. is that he began to build it, but *did not finish it.*[a]

Unjust reproaches (*v.* 33).—"Ye have transgressed." I. So, doubtless, we have, but it was the rebound consequent on unjust legislation. II. So, doubtless, we have; but on thy part it is most ungenerous to remind us of our sin; we incurred the penalty fighting for thee. III. So, doubtless, we have; but it is a question whether your sin is not greater.

Unconscious influence.—How solemn is the thought of the influence which consciously or unconsciously we are continually exercising upon others! We cannot rid ourselves from this responsibility. It follows us, in proportion to the weight of our characters, into all our actings: nor does it cease when we refrain to act, for who will say that the example of indolence or idleness has no influence? Our words pass from us, but how often are they, in the ears of those that hear them, living seeds that spring up either as wheat or as noxious weeds! And if we think to take refuge in silence from this responsibility, there may be those around us who, from our known characters, were expecting a word from us, and have gone away disappointed, feeling that the "salt hath lost its savour!" On the other hand, there lies for us the danger of acting or speaking too much, with a view to external results, "as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, to be seen of men." How shall we be safe? The answer is, by being true—true to Christ, therefore true to ourselves. If we abide in Him, and His words abide in

us, we shall not fail · we shall "have salt in ourselves." It is in departing from Him that the salt loses its savour; but if the salt is good, its salutary influence cannot fail sooner or later to produce good results.

36–40. (36) **let us go down,** Saul does not inquire of God, so is reproved by the priest. (37) **asked counsel,** inquired of God by *Urim and Thummim.* (38) **this sin,** suspecting some reason for delayed response. Comp. Achan's case. (39) **as the Lord liveth,** needlessly taking a new oath: another sign of rashness. (40) **people said,** in evident tone of discontent.

The assent of indifference.—The words, "Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee," twice repeated *v.* 36, 40, and the silence of the people when questioned, *v.* 39, point to the beginning of resentment. I. Saul receives in this indifference and silence a check from the people. II. He also receives a check from God, *v.* 37. III. Proudly self-confident, he will cast lots between the people and himself. IV. The result proved that he had erred.

The folly of indifference.—It appears that Themistocles, when a boy, was full of spirit and fire, quick of apprehension, naturally inclined to bold attempts, and likely to make a great statesman. His hours of leisure and vacation he spent not like other boys, in idleness and play, but he was always inventing and composing declamations, the subjects of which were either impeachments or defences of some of his schoolfellows; so that his master would often say, "Boy, you will be nothing common or indifferent, you will either be a blessing or a curse to the community." So remember, you who profess to be the followers of the Lord Jesus, that to you indifference is impossible; you must bless the Church and the world by your holiness, or you will curse them both by your hypocrisy and inconsistency. In the visible Church it is most true "no man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself."

41–46. (41) **give a perfect lot,** either, "*show the innocent*,"[a] or "O Lord, grant us integrity. Give the truth."[b] (42) **taken,** or fixed on as the guilty one. (43) *v.* 27. **die,** according to his father's foolish vow. (44) **God do so,** Ru. i. 17.[c] (45) "Determined opposition of the people, who see God's will with more impartial vision."[d] (46) **went up,** abandoning intention, *see v.* 36.

Importance of little things (*v.* 43).—I. Little things become important as a part of a series—that is, by aggregation. II. They also become important because they have critical relations to mind and temperament to times and seasons. III. A little thing, or that which men call little, may be very trifling indeed for one purpose, and in one direction; and yet, for another purpose, and in another direction, it may be extremely potent.[e]

The honeycomb.—

> Now first appears the rough proportioned frame,
> Rough in the draught, but perfect in the scheme;
> When, lo! each little Archimedes high,
> Metes every angle with judicious eye;
> Adjusts the centering cones with skill profound,
> And forms the curious hexagon around.
> The cells indorsed with double range adhere,
> Knit on the sides, and guarded on the rear;

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trates the laws." —*Solon.*

popular discontent

vv. 36–38. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 123.

"But endless is the list of human ills, and sighs might sooner fail than cause to sigh."—*Young.*

"Indifference never wrote great works, nor thought out striking inventions, nor reared the solemn architecture that awed the soul, nor breathed sublime music, nor painted glorious pictures, nor undertook heroic philanthropies. All these grandeurs are born of enthusiasm, are done heartily."—*Anon.*

they rescue Jonathan

a Syk. Com.
b Gesenius, Wordsworth.
c Comp. case of Jephthah's daughter.
d Ewald.
"There was now a freer and more understanding spirit in the nation at large than in the times of Jephthah; the people recognised the religious aspect of Jonathan's exploit, and rallied round him with a zeal that overbore even the royal vow." —*Stanley.*
e H. W. Beecher.
"Trivial circumstances, which show the manners of the age, are often more

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instructive, as well as entertaining, than the great transactions of wars and negotiations, which are nearly similar in all periods and in all countries of the world." — *Hume.*
f Brooke.

Nought of itself with circling chambers bound,
Each cell is formed, to form the cells around;
While each still gives what each alike demands,
And but supported by supporting stands;
Jointly transferring and transferred exists;
And, as by magic union, subsists.
Amazing elegance! transcendent art!
Contrived at once to borrow and impart;
In action notable, as council great,
Their fabrics rise, just emblems of their state.*f*

the wars and family of Saul

a "He was victorious." — *Genevius.*

"He was preserved." — LXX.

b Stanley.

"Our life is a warfare; and we ought not, while passing through it, to sleep without a sentinel, or march without a scout. He who neglects either of these precautions exposes himself to surprise, and to become a prey to the diligence and perseverance of his adversary." — *Feltham.*
Gilimex, when he was led in triumph by Belisarius, cried out, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

47—51. (47) **took the kingdom,** defeat of Phil. brought the country into subjection to him. **Zobah,** one of the smaller kingdoms of Aram. Situate bet. Damascus and the Euphrates. **vexed,***a* Heb. means to condemn. Comp. 2 Sa. viii. 14. (48) **host,** army. (49) "Names of his children indic. how Saul's mind swayed bet. old heathen superstitions, and the pure relig. of Jehovah."*b* (50, 51) Comp. 1 Sa. ix. 1. (52) **sore war,** continuous and desperate. **took him,** as threatened, ch. viii. 11.

Saul's body guard (*v.* 52).—This taking to himself of the strong and valiant was—I. A predicted measure, viii. 11. II. An arbitrary measure—people not consulted. III. A politic measure. IV. An expensive measure. So many less to till the land; so many more to be supported by the toilers.

War and peace.—Franklin was a staunch opposer of the war system. "If statesmen," says he, "were more accustomed to calculation, wars would be much less frequent. Canada might have been purchased from France for a tenth part of the money England spent in the conquest of it; and if, instead of fighting us for the power to tax us, she had kept us in good humour by allowing us to dispose of our own money, and giving us now and then a little of her own by way of donation to colleges or hospitals, for cutting canals, or fortifying ports, she might easily have drawn from us much more by occasional voluntary grants and contributions, than ever she could by taxes. Sensible people will give a bucket or two of water to a dry pump, in order to get from it afterwards all they want. After much occasion to consider the folly and mischiefs of a state of warfare, and the little or no advantage obtained even by those nations which have conducted it with the most success, I have been apt to think there has never been, nor ever will be, any such thing as a good war or a bad peace."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

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Samuel charges Saul to smite Amalek

a Jos. vi. 17—19. *b* 1 Sa. xiv. 48.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.; J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 294, *vv.* 2, 3. *J. A. Miller, Saul,* 133.
"It is necessary to look forward

1—5. (1) **also said,** some years after, during wh. Saul had been left very much to himself. Now his faithfulness to God must be again tested. **hearken thou,** by an *exact* and *entire* obedience. (2) **Lord of hosts,** 1 Sa. i. 11. **Amalek,** Ex. xvii. 8—16; Nu. xxiv. 20. (3) **utterly destroy,** as a sacred war all the spoil was devoted, put under the ban.*a* Provocation seems to have been given by the Amalekites.*b* (4) **Telaim,** prob. *Telem* of Jos. xv. 24. Comp. numb. of army with ch. xiii. 15. (5) **laid wait,** marg. *fought.*

Providential mercies a reason for obedience (*v.* 1).—I. God sometimes promotes men for a specific purpose (Est. iv. 14). II.

Instead of regarding promotion as an evidence of favour to ourselves only, we should ask what God may design for others through us. III. The honour set upon us by God should induce us to gratefully obey Him: even when obedience may be difficult.

A sinner advised.—If you feel that you are not a believer, write down this word, "condemned;" and if you are a believer in Jesus, and put your trust in Him alone, write down "forgiven." Do it, even though you have to write the dreary word "condemned." We lately received into church-fellowship a young man, who said, "Sir, I wrote down the word 'condemned,' and I looked at it: there it was; I had written it myself, condemned." As he looked, the tears began to flow, and his heart began to break; and ere long he fled to Christ, put the paper in the fire, and wrote down "forgiven." This young man was about the sixth who had been brought to the Lord in the same way; and there have been several since.[c]

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as well as backward, as some think it always necessary to regulate their conduct by things that have been done of old times; but that past which is so presumptuously brought forward as a precedent for the present, was itself founded on an alteration of some past that went before it."—*Madame de Stael.*

c C. H. Spurgeon.

6–9. (6) **Kenites,**[a] Ge. xv. 19. (7) **Havilah,** Ge. xxv. 18. **Shur,** Ge. xvi. 7. (8) **Agag,** *fire, flaming*, prob. the official title of kings of Amalek.[b] (9) **spared Agag,** *etc.*, "to make a splendid show at the sacrificial thanksgiving."[c] In this Saul acted on his own will, not in simple obedience to God. **fatlings,** Heb. *mishenim*, "those brought forth at the second birth and considered best."[d]

the Kenites are spared

a Their principal seat seems to have been the rocky tracts on the S. and S.W. of Palestine, near the Amalekites (Nu. xxiv. 21, 22). —*Ayre.*

The wisdom of the Kenites (*v.* 6).—**I.** The events of life often bring men into the society of the ungodly. II. It is a proof of wisdom, and an evidence of faith, to come out and be separate from the ungodly.[e]—*Past kindness requited* (*v.* 6).—Learn—I. How greatly God loves His own people. He will avenge their wrongs and reward their helpers. II. Deeds of kindness remembered by a God of mercy. III. Do good to all men as you have opportunity. Bread cast on the waters found after many days. IV. Note how our present conduct may affect our remote posterity.

Kindness to an enemy.—A slave, who had by the force of his sterling worth risen high in the confidence of his master, saw one day, trembling in the slave market, a negro, whose grey head and bent form showed him to be in the last weakness of old age. He implored his master to purchase him. He expressed his surprise, but gave his consent. The old man was bought and conveyed to the estate. When there, he who had pleaded for him took him to his own cabin—placed him on his own bed—fed him at his own board—gave him water from his own cup; when he shivered carried him into the sunshine; when he drooped in the hut, bore him softly to the shade. "What is the meaning of all this?" asked a witness. "Is he your father?" "No." "Is he your brother?" "No." "Is he, then your friend?" "No! he is my enemy. Years ago he stole me from my native village, and sold me for a slave: and the good Lord has said, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.'"

"Agag was saved for his stature and beauty."—*Josephus.*

d Wordsworth.

e C. Stanford.

"Let them obey that know not how to rule."—*Shakespeare.*

10–15. (10) **unto Sam.,** as prophet. (11) **repenteth me,** "ascribed to God, when bad men give him cause to alter his course."[a] **grieved,**[b] Heb. displeased, angry. **he cried,** in prayer. (12) **Carmel,**[c] not Mount Carmel, but a city in the hill country of Judah, now *Kurmul.* **a place,** monument or trophy.[d]

Saul tries to deceive Samuel

a Jamieson.

"When God

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changes His doings by His unchangeable counsel, when by reason of the change of His doing, and not of His design, He is said to repent."—*Wordsworth.*

b Jo. iv. 1.

c Jos. xv. 55; 1 Sa. xxvii. 3.

d "According to Jewish tradition, a triumphal arch of olives, myrtles, and palms."—*Stanley.*

e Explained by 2 Sa. xviii. 18. "Absalom's pillar was called *Yad-Absalom.*"—*Spk. Com.*

v. 11. *Dr. J. H. Newman, Univ. S.* 146.

v. 13. *C. Bullen,* 139; *H. Blunt,* ii. 127.

v. 13, 14. *R. P. Buddicom,* 1; *H. Linsau,* 1. 139; *J. A. Miller,* 110.

f *Dr. Parker.*

g *Watson Smith.*

You cannot walk in the ways of Christ, if you are not alive to God in Christ.

Samuel's reproof and Saul's duplicity

a Ge. xlii. 13.

b "Saul says that Sam. blames him for what was done in honour of Sam.'s God."—*Spk. Com.*

c *W. C. Ramsden.* "The most difficult province in

Heb. *yad,* a hand.*e* (13) Obs. the self-complacent tone. (14) Obs. Sam.'s self-restraint. (15) **to sacrifice,** Saul supposed intended worship of God would excuse or cover disobedience.

The rigour of Divine law (*v.* 14).—Introduction:—Note—(1) That man cannot evade Divine retribution (*v.* 2.); (2) That kindness to the good insures Divine compensation (*v.* 6). Consider—I. The transcendent importance of rendering literal obedience to Divine requirements. Divine language never exceeds Divine meaning. II. The fearful possibilty of resting satisfied with partial obedience. III. The utter impossibility of rendering disobedience well-pleasing to God. 1. Divine requirements are absolute; 2. God will not allow one duty to be performed on the ruins of another. IV. The danger of being seduced into disobedience by social clamour. 1. There is a higher law than the verdict of society; 2. There is a crisis in which social force can yield us no assistance. Conclusion:—(1) Let the guilty sue for pardon; (2) Let the disobedient be assured of detection; (3) Let no man tamper with the Word of God./—*Self-deception* (*v.* 14).—Consider—I. The master-evil: want of whole-hearted surrender and obedience to the will and commandments of God. II. In this history we see lamentable weakness of faith and purpose. III. The deceiving love of self, self-interest, covetous desires, vain ambitions, render us insensible to the sovereign claims of God and truth. IV. There is here also a melancholy example of sparing sins and evils that should be slain, sheltering and harbouring them under false pretences by unworthy pleas and excuses. V. How short and easy is the stage between this evil partiality and a blinding hypocrisy throughout the man. VI. It is a vain thing to throw the blame on others, when we are disobeying the plainly expressed will of God. VII. We cut ourselves off, in this way, from all true kingship.*g*

Result of disobedience.—A young man was chained to a fellow-convict, and was about to leave his native country and heart-broken mother, probably for ever. When a child, he was allowed to have his own way. When his mother ought to have firmly, but kindly, enforced obedience, she foolishly yielded to his whims. The effect of this unwise home-training became yearly more apparent. When sent to school, he was idle and would not learn. He soon began to play truant. His mother scolded the master for punishing her headstrong boy. With bad companions he was soon found robbing orchards and cruelly treating dumb animals. His career was from bad to worse. At last, for a high-way robbery, he was convicted, and sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude.

16–21. (16) **this night,** Gilgal only some 15 miles fr. Ramah. (17) **little,** ch. ix. 21. **the Lord anointed,** thou art only a servant to obey. (18) **the sinners,***a* Saul only executor of deserved punishment. (19) **fly upon,** ch. xiv. 32, dealing with them in his own wilfulness. (20) Saul's was obedience with a *but.* It should have had no such limitation. (21) **the people,** he meanly tries to put the blame on others. **should have been,** he evidently knew well what his duty had been. **thy God,** censure for Sam.*b*

Saul's disobedience and excuses (*vv.* 20, 21).—Learn, from the history before us—I. The nature of the obedience required by God. It must be total and entire. Partial fulfilment of Divine

commands is but little better than total disregard of them. II. The growing nature of sin. One sin makes many. Saul's disobedience leads to his making mean excuses. III. The firmness with which the wrong desires of the multitude should be met.[c]

Punishment of disobedience.—The Rev. Herbert Palmer, B.D., Master of Queen's College, Cambridge, who died in 1647, and who was "a burning and shining light" in his day, was remarkable for his dutiful affection to his parents, not only when he was a child, but during his whole life. He was peculiarly attentive to his pious, aged mother; promoting, to the utmost of his power, both her temporal and spiritual comfort, even to the day of her death, which happened not long before his own. He used frequently to enforce this duty in his ministry, observing the emphasis which God puts upon it through the whole of the Scriptures. He used to say that he had noticed the effects of disobedience to parents, so that he scarcely ever knew undutiful children escape some visible judgment of God in the present life; he also thought that the mischiefs which occur in society frequently take their rise in contempt of parental authority.

22, 23. (22) "There is a poetical rhythm in the original, wh. gives it the tone of a Div. oracle uttered by the Spirit of God."[a] **than sacrifice,** wh. is only offering what a man *has*, obedience is offering *himself*. (23) **witchcraft,** divination. **stubbornness,** self-willed opposition to God. **idolatry,** Heb. *teraphim*.[b]

The true and the false in God's worship (*v.* 22).—Obedience is the truest sign of love to God, Worship consists not chiefly in sacrifice; a willing ear is the best index to a rightly-feeling heart. Without obedience—I. Good deeds, or what the world deems good deeds, are of no avail. Beneficence may not always come from a converted soul. Sometimes the most impure motives may lie at the roots of the deed. II. Conformity to the world's standard of morality will be useless. Honesty in business is not religion. III. Ceremonies and forms will be but so much hypocrisy and pretence. Ritualism is but seldom a token of righteousness. Often it proves it to be a whited sepulchre, beautiful outside; but inside full of bones and impurity. Learn:—Give to God (1) Literal, (2) Prompt, (3) Willing, obedience.[c]—*True obedience better than verbal protestations.*—Why the Lord prefers obedience to sacrifice, etc. I. It is a greater proof of sincerity. To sacrifice easy, obedience difficult: sacrifice momentary, obedience continual; sacrifice formal, obedience a matter of heart and conscience. II. Its effect on others more deep, continuous, and permanent. Learn:—Not what you do or give, but what you are, that needs most thought.—*The losses of godlessness.*—I. What Saul did—rejected Word of God. Disobeyed commandments. II. What God did—rejected Saul. He can cast down as well as set up. Illustrate this point by many examples. Learn:—God honours those who honour Him.

Legal obedience.—Sincere obedience bids the pilgrim wash himself first, and Jesus Christ shall rinse him afterwards: bids him plant a fig-leaf here and there, and make a patched frock of duty; and if it prove too scanty, Jesus Christ shall eke it out with His fine linen. This expedient pleases him for a season, and to work he goes, hoping to make himself so fair and tight that Jesus Christ shall fall in love with him, and give him rare commendation instead of free pardon. But "though he wash him-

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friendship is the letting a man see his faults and errors; which should, if possible, be so contrived, that he may perceive our advice is given him, not so much to please ourselves as for his own advantage. The reproaches, therefore, of a friend should always be strictly just, and not too frequent." — *Budgell.*

Samuel declares Saul rejected

a Wordsworth.

"Thus clearly is one of the highest prophetic ideas anticipated here."—*Ewald.*

b Ge. xxxi. 19; comp. Is. i. 11, 16, 17, lxvi 3; Je vii. 22, 23; Mi. vi 6–8; Ho. vi. 6; Mar. xii. 33.

c *v.* 22. *T. Boston*, ii. 51; *W. Reading*, ii. 345; *J. Penn*, ii. 1; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, ii. 293; *J. Slade*, v. 235; *E. C. Marsh*, *Lampt Lect.* 118; *H. Alford*, iii. 330; *H. Goodwin*, i. 195.
vv. 22, 23. *Bp. Taylor*, vi. 343; *Bp. Mant*, i. 255; *G. B. Blomfield*, 55; *Dr. S. Clarke*, x. 265; *H. Alford*, ii. 44.

c J. Hoatson.

d J. Berridge.

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Saul's fruitless remorse

a Comp. *v.* 30.

b "The struggle bet. Sam. and Saul in their final parting is in life, by the rent of Sam.'s robe of state, as he tears himself away fr. Saul's grasp."—*Stanley.*

v. 24. *Pain Ss.* iv. 124.

"When a man sinneth, he thinketh with himself, I will do this no more; after, another sin promiseth as much profit as that, and he saith again, I will do this no more; presently another sin promiseth as much profit as that, and he saith again, I will do this and no more. This is the property of sin to put a man forward, until he commit that which he condemneth himself, that he may be tormented of his own conscience."—*Henry Smith.*

c Dr. J. Owen.

Samuel declares the kingdom rent from Saul

*a Geseniu*s.

b Stanley.

c Wordsworth.

d "If Saul had been really penitent, he would have prayed to be humbled, rather than to be honoured."—*St. Gregory*, thro' *Wordsworth.*

vv. 28—30. *W. H. Mill, Lent Ss.* 136.

self in snow-water, and make his hands exceeding clean, he is plunged in the ditch again, and his own clothes abhor him," (Job ix. 30, 31).[d]

24—27. (24) **sinned,** the language of repentance, not the full spirit of it.[a] Saul only dreaded *punishment.* **feared the people,** comp. ch. xiii. 45. As king it was his duty to lead, and if need be restrain, the people. (25) **turn . . Lord,** continuing his own wilful way, and persuading Sam. to sanction it. (26) **not return,** public disapproval of Saul's act must be shown. (27) **mantle,**[b] characteristic dress of the prophet. Prob. he retained the shape of the *little coat,* ch. ii. 19.

A lost kingdom (*v.* 26).—I. The highest personal qualities and widest material resources not sufficient to hold a kingdom against the will of God. Saul's strength, courage, etc. II. The rejection of the word of the Lord leads ever to most disastrous consequences. Loss of personal influence, happiness, etc. III. Rejecting the word of grace brings one under the word of condemnation, and leads to forfeiture of kingdom of heaven. IV. We have now before us the picture of a man whom God has rejected.

Forgiveness of sin.—The forgiveness that is with God is such as becomes Him, such as is suitable to His greatness, goodness, and other excellences of His nature, such as that therein He will be known to be God. It is not like that narrow, difficult, halving and manacled forgiveness that is found amongst men, when any such thing is found amongst them; but it is full, free, boundless, bottomless, absolute—such as becomes His nature and excellences. It is, in a word, forgiveness that is with God, and by the exercise whereof He will be known so to be. If there be any pardon with God, it is such as becomes Him to give: when He pardons He will abundantly pardon. Go with your half-forgiveness, limited, conditional pardons with reserves and limitations, unto the sons of men; it may be it may become them—it is like themselves: that of God is absolute and perfect, before which our sins are as a cloud before the east wind and the rising sun. Hence he is said to do this work with His whole heart and His whole soul, freely, bountifully, largely, to indulge and forgive unto us our sins, and to cast them unto the bottom of the sea—unto a bottomless ocean, an emblem of infinite mercy.[c]

28—31. (28) **this day,** actual deprivation did not come at once, but this was the beginning of his downfall. (29) **strength,** Heb. *netsah,* what is bright and shines continually, and so may be relied on.[a] The victory of Israel.[b] The glory of Israel.[c] (30) **honour . . people,** Saul feared *disgrace* much more than sin.[d] (31) Sam. kindly fosters the little good to be found in Saul.

Human pity and Divine integrity.—We have here—I. An instance of a too late repentance. II. Of an insufficient repentance. Saul mourned because of loss of power, etc. III. Of human pity excited by the spectacle of human sorrow. IV. A man vainly seeking by attention to the outward forms of religion to recover the Divine favour of Him who desires truth in the inward parts.

Sin a master.—When the morning sun is bright, and the summer breezes gently blowing from the shore, the little river-boat is enticed from the harbour to start on her trip of pleasure on the clear, calm sea. All Nature seems to enlist in her service. The fair wind fills her sails, the favourable tide rolls onward in her

course, the parted sea makes way for her to glide swiftly and merrily on her happy voyage; but having thus been her servants, and carried her whither she would these soon become her masters, and carry her whither she would not. The breeze that swelled her sails has become a storm, and rends them; the waves that quietly rippled for her pleasure now rise in fury, and dash over her for her destruction; and the vessel which rode in the morning as a queen upon the waters sinks before night comes on, the slave of those very winds and waves which had beguiled her to use them as her servants. So it is with sin.[e]

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v. 29. *J. H. Pott*, ii. 144.

v. 30. *J. Miller*, i. 238; *W. Short*, 298; *J. A. Miller*, *Saul*, 156.

[e] *Morse.*

32—35. (32) **delicately,**[a] *joyfully*, or perhaps *fawningly*, to appease Samuel, or *anxiously*, in terror of his fate. (33) **so,** or still more,[b] **hewed,** *etc.*, by his own hand, some think by executioner. Thus fulfilling the ban, or devotement, wh. Saul had neglected. (34) Saul prob. offended at Agag's execution. (35) **mourned for,** ch. xvi. 1. **repented,** *see v.* 11.

death of Agag

Samuel mourns for Saul

[a] "Heb. *maadmnoth*, from *adan*, to live softly, voluptuously."—*Gesenius.*

[b] "Lec. in losing her son, she loses also the king of her people, and her loss is thus greater than that of any other bereaved mother in the nation."—*Ewald.*

vv. 34, 35. *W. Dealtry*, 219; *J. S. M. Anderson*, ii. 342.

Agag's last words (*v.* 33).—I. In what respect the bitterness of death was passed to Agag. To him, a proud heathen, there was nothing worse than defeat and capture by foes he had despised. To worldly men, who have no thought of the future, there are things worse than death, as poverty, disgrace, disease, etc. II. The higher sense in which the bitterness of death may be past. When by faith in Christ the favour of God and the hope of immortality are realised. The sting of death extracted. The Christian a victor in Christ.

Dying without mercy.—It was in the commencement of my ministry, writes one, that I was requested by a Christian father to visit his eldest son, prostrated by sickness. I was assured that the feelings of the son were very susceptible to religious truth, and his mind much exercised concerning his condition as a sinner. I called to see him. He conversed quite freely and unreservedly, and requested prayer to be offered for him. His sickness terminated favourably, and the young man recovered, without giving his heart to Christ. He lived more indifferent to religious truth than he had ever done, and plunged more deeply into pleasure. In a few months he was again laid low by a now mortal disease. Slowly but fatally and irresistibly it progressed, producing at times delirium. This time it was impossible to interest him in the Gospel. His mother was in tears for him. She pressed home upon his conscience the claims of duty, but without avail. At last, a few hours before his death, he broke the silence which he had kept, saying, "Mother, my hour is past." "Not so, my son," she replied; "remember that God is merciful." "I know it, I know it; but, mother, God is also just." These were his last words. And so he closed his eyes in death, without hope in God's mercy. Reader, if ever your thoughts and feelings become interested in the great question of your salvation, let not that favoured moment pass away and leave you unblessed by the mercy of God.

"What disarrays like death? It defaces the fascination of the beautiful. It breaks the lamp of the wise. It withers the strength of the mighty. It snatches the store of the rich. Kings are stripped of trapping, trophy, treasure; 'their glory shall not descend after them.'"—*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1063.

life of David

Samuel charged

1—5. (1) **rejected him,**[a] bec. he had proved unfaithful by his wilfulness. **horn,** comp. *vial* of ch. x. 1, the word is not the same. **Jesse,** Ru. iv. 17—22. (2) **with thee,** in thine hand.

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with the anointing

a 1 Sa. xv. 10, 11.

b "*Secrecy* and *concealment* are not the same as *duplicity* and *falsehood*. Concealment of a good purpose, for a good purpose, is clearly justifiable, *e.g.* in war, in medical treatment, in state policy, and in the ordinary affairs of life. There is nothing in the least inconsistent with *truth* in the occurrence here related." — *Spk. Com.*

c "Samuel, being the offerer, had a right to invite any guest he pleased."—*Jamieson.*

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

d Cicero.

the three sons of Jesse

a 1 Sa. x. 23, 24; Ps. cxlvii. 10, 11; Lu. xvi. 15.

b 1 Sa. xvii. 13; 2 Sa. xiii. 3; 1 Ch. ii. 13, xx. 7.

vv. 6, 7. *Dr. Wordsworth, Occa. S.* iii. 137.

v. 7. *Dr. T. Coney,* i. 442; *T. Hunter,* ii. 201; *D. Dickson,* 223; *Dr. J. H. Newman, S. for the Day,* 72; *S. Summers,* 527; *W. Fenn,* 226.

cS. Martin.

d R. V. Pryce, M.A.

"The sea works, the heavens move, the earth never stands still. Thus the heart of man never come to sacrifice, Sam. was to conceal his true object by setting forth prominently a secondary object.[b] (3) to the sacrifice,[c] to the social feast that followed the sacrifice. (4) trembled, as Beth. was not one of the circuit towns, the elders cd. not account for this special visit. (5) sanctify, Ex. xix. 14, 15.

Our grief to be moderated by the Divine will (*v.* 1).—I. The cause of Samuel's grief. The decline of a great man in the favour of God. Disappointment in one's official work. II. The corrective of this sorrow. The will of God. To grieve may be natural: to continue to grieve may be a sin.—*Unrecognised royalty* (*v.* 1, last clause).—I. God had been regarding the family of Jesse. II. One of them the future king. Which? III. Happy the father among whose sons there stands a king.—*The possible wickedness of a backslider* (*v.* 2).—I. The first step downward—departure from God. II. The second step—rejection by God. III. The possible sin of such—murder of a prophet in discharge of official functions.—*The anxious inquiry* (*v.* 4).—I. God's messengers—prophets, etc.: last of all His Son. II. Natural fears—guilty conscience, etc. III. Gracious reassurance—Jesus came not to condemn but to save.

Inordinate grief.—All things that are pernicious in their progress must be evil in their birth. Now grief, and every other passion, if carried to an immoderate height, have undoubtedly very mischievous consequences; and therefore, from their very rise, must be tainted with a great part of the lurking mischief. For no sooner is the government of reason thrown off than they rush forward of their own accord; weakness takes a pleasure to indulge itself; and having, if the expression may be allowed, imperceptibly launched out into the main ocean, can find no place where to stop.[d]

6—10. (6) said, not aloud but he had this thought in his heart. (7) God spake in the *soul* of the prophet, guiding his judgment and actions. outward appearance, this had been the ground of people's satisfaction in Saul.[a] Heb. word used means *eyes*. (8) pass before, Sam.'s feeling on sight of each son decided the choice. (9) Shammah, also written *Shimeah*, and *Shimma*.[b] (10) seven, altogether: or perhaps without David; comp. 1 Chr. ii. 13—15.

Man's heart under God's eye (*v.* 7).—Consider—I. God's knowledge of human nature. It is—1. Immediate and direct: 2. Perfect; 3. Surpassing men's knowledge of each other, and of themselves. II. The lessons this subject yields. 1. The folly of permitted self-delusion; 2. The utter uselessness of all hypocrisy; 3. The exposed position of all our sins; 4. The thorough competency of God to save us; 5. The duty of being passive under Divine discipline; 6. The reasonableness of our acting on God's judgment of men. Conclusion:—See here—(1) An antidote for disquiet under misconception and misrepresentation; (2) A motive to diligence in keeping the heart; (3) The advantageous position of Him who is now our Lord and Master, and who will come to be our Judge; (4) Our ignorance even of our own nature.[c]—*The pure heart* (*v.* 7).—I. The highest favours for the pure heart. The Lord looketh on the heart and gives His grace accordingly. II. The noblest work done by the pure heart. The noblest work done, not by gifts, but graces, in the kingdom of God.[d]—*Forming opinions.*—We are often deceived by appearances.

Thus, the sun appears to rise and set; when riding, the houses and trees appear to move; marshy or boggy ground appears firm for the walker; poison berries (as deadly nightshade) appear to be fit for food. To escape deception one has to be careful, to examine, to test by experiment, We are more liable to be deceived by human beings than by other creatures. Why? They can put on appearances to suit occasions. But though one may deceive man he cannot deceive God. This we shall see if we consider—I. What man judges by—"outward appearance." 1. This is all he can see. A few words about faces (handsome, open, intelligent, and the opposite) and other things (tall, well-knit forms, feeble, infirm, deformed figures); 2. This often deceives. A fine, handsome lad, was the other day imprisoned for a grave offence, and punished. No one judging by looks would have thought him guilty. Many of the best, not good-looking—(A. Fuller; Dr. Chalmers; Christmas Evans, etc.). II. What God judges by: "the heart." 1. Explain what is here meant by heart. Affections, principles, thoughts, purposes; 2. God sees hearts more thoroughly than we see faces. We can only see the face in the light: He sees the heart by night and day. Understands our thoughts, etc.; 3. He forms His judgment by what He sees within. Out of the heart are the issues of life. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he; 4. Whatever man may think, we must stand or fall by the judgment of God. Learn: (1) We cannot deceive God; (2) Pray for a clean heart.[e]

Judging from appearances.—Whatever truth there may be in phrenology, or in Lavater's kindred science of physiognomy, we shall do well scrupulously to avoid forming an opinion against a man from his personal appearance. If we so judge we shall often commit the greatest injustice, which may, if we should ever live to be disfigured by sickness or marred by age, be returned into our own bosom to our bitter sorrow. Plato compared Socrates to the gallipots of the Athenian apothecaries, on the outside of which were painted grotesque figures of apes and owls, but they contained within precious balsams. All the beauty of a Cleopatra cannot save her name from being infamous; personal attractions have adorned some of the grossest monsters that ever cursed humanity. Judge then no man or woman after their outward fashion, but with purified eye behold the hidden beauty of the heart and life.[f]

11—13. (11) **sit down,** Heb. *turn round*, to sit at table. **till he come,** David prob. 18 yrs. of age at this time.[a] (12) **ruddy,** *etc.*, golden-haired.[b] (13) **horn,** "long horn filled with the consecrated oil preserved in the Tabernacle at Nob."

The forgotten son (*v.* 11).—I. He was the youngest son. We often find the youngest son becoming the greatest. II. He was engaged in peaceful pursuits. They did not seem to be any preparation for future eminence. III. The child of whom we may think least may be greatest. None of the family appear to have thought much of David (xvii. 28).—*Promotion.*—I. God can elevate men from the most humble to the most distinguished places—Joseph, Daniel, Mordecai. II. The path of duty is the way to prosperity and honour. III. God seeks out those to accomplish His ends who have the moral and spiritual qualities required.—*Character and circumstances.*—I. The inferior value of circumstances. II. The superior value of character.

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rests, sleeping or waking: it fancies more in a moment than it can compass in many years. Lust entices it, vanity possesses it, anger disquiets it, pleasure seduces it, envy torments it, sorrow and sadness vex and molest it. It finds no rest until it returns to Christ."—*Spencer.*

e S. S. Address, from the Hive. The heart of a wise man should resemble a mirror, which reflects every object without being sullied by any.

To adopt popular opinions without the slightest hesitation, is to run the risk of introducing into science, to its great injury, a multitude of confused notions founded on phenomena imperfectly seen and inaccurately examined; but to reject such opinions without examination, is often to lose an opportunity of important discovery.

f Spurgeon.

David is sent for and anointed

a Wordsworth.

b "We are enabled to fix his appearance at once in our minds. He was of short stature. He had red or auburn hair. His bright eyes are especially mentioned, and generally he was remarkable for the grace of his figure and coun-

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tenance, well made, and of immense strength and agility." — *Stanley.*

v. 13. *H. Lindsay, Lect* i 155.

c T. Adams.

Saul troubled with an evil spirit

a "His own gloomy reflections, the loss of his throne and the exinction of his royal house, made him jealous, irritable, vindictive, and subject to fits of morbid melancholy." — *Jamieson.* "The first example of what, in after times, has been called religious madness."—*Stanley.*

b "Bochart has collected many passages fr. profane writers, which speak of the medicinal effects of music on the mind and body, especially as appeasing anger, and soothing and pacifying a troubled spirit."-*Speak. Com.* v. 14. *Granville Sharp, The Case of Saul*, etc.; *C. Heartley*, ii. 88; *J. Williams. Char. of O. T.* 184.

v. 18. *Dr. J. H. Newman*, iii. 470.

David is sent for to comfort Saul

a 1 Sa. viii. 10, 11.

b Pr. xviii. 16.

v. 23. *H. Shorthouse*, 136.

Appearances.—They that seem best to the world, are often the worst to God; they that are best to God seem worst to the world. When the moon is highest to the earth, she is darkest to heaven, when she is highest to heaven, she is darkest to the earth. So, often men most glorious to the world, are obscured to the Divine approbation; others, obscure to the world's acknowledgment, are principally respected in God's favour. Man would have cleared the Pharisee and condemned the publican when they both appeared in the temple together—the one, as it were, in the choir, the other in the belfry; but Christ's judgment is, that the publican departed rather justified.[c]

14—18. (14) **evil spirit,** *etc.*, a melancholy spirit.[a] **from the Lord,** sent as judgment. Comp. *hardening* Phar.'s heart. **troubled him,** choked, terrified. (15, 16) **cunning,** or skilful, **with his hand,** some harps played thus, and some with an instrument, called a *plectrum.* **be well,**[b] music the best remedy for such melancholy. (17) **play well,** everything depended on the man's having a soul for music, and so able to meet Saul's moods. (18) Saul had no hint of David's anointing. **matters,** marg. *speech.* Possibly a good singer as well as harpist.

The world's remedy for a troubled spirit (*v.* 16).—I. The world's remedy here was music. It is often change of scene, etc. II. The world's remedy, as in this case, sometimes overruled for good by Divine mercy. III. Compare this with God's remedy. Is any afflicted, let him pray. Removal of cause better than temporary change of thoughts.

Subjugation of a king's wrath.—Sultan Amurath, a prince notorious for his cruelty, laid siege to Bagdad; and, on taking it, gave orders for putting thirty thousand Persians to death, notwithstanding they had submitted and laid down their arms. Among the number of the victims was a musician, who entreated the officer to whom the execution of the sultan's order was intrusted to spare him for a moment, that he might speak to the author of the dreadful decree. The officer consented, and he was brought before Amurath, who permitted him to exhibit a specimen of his art. Like the musician in Homer, he took up a kind of psaltery which resembles a lyre, and has six strings on each side, and accompanied it with his voice. He sung the capture of Bagdad, and the triumph of Amurath. The pathetic tones and exulting sounds which he drew from the instrument, joined to the alternative plaintiveness and boldness of his strains, rendered the prince unable to restrain the softer emotions of his soul. He even suffered him to proceed, until, overpowered with harmony, he melted into tears of pity, and repented of his cruelty. In consideration of the musician's abilities, he not only directed his people to spare those among the prisoners who yet remained alive, but also to give them instant liberty.

19—23. (19) **send me,** exercising his right of appropriating whom he pleased.[a] (20) **ass,** *etc.*, as a *baksheesh*, or present.[b] (21) **stood before him,** daily waiting on him. **armour-bearer,** comp. *squire*-attending on the modern knight. (22) **let . . me,** *i.e.* permanently. (23) **when,** *etc.*, this was the regular custom.

The healing power of music (*v.* 23).—From this healing power of music we infer—I. The kindness of the Creator in endowing

some men in every circle with the musical genius and voice. II. The obligation of those who are endowed with this gift to employ it for the common good. III. The mercy of God in ordaining the use of music in public worship. IV. The duty of those who have the conduct of Divine worship to promote good psalmody.[c]

Farinelli.—Remarkable, as well as truly parallel, is the case of Philip the Fifth of Spain, and the musician Farinelli, in the last century. The king was seized with a total dejection of spirits, which made him refuse to be shaved, and incapable of appearing in council, or of attending to any affairs. The queen, after all other methods had been essayed, thought of trying what might be effected by the influence of music, to which the king was known to be highly susceptible. The celebrated musician, Farinelli, was invited to Spain; and on his arrival, it was contrived that there should be a concert in a room adjoining the king's apartment, in which the artist should perform one of his most captivating songs. The king appeared surprised at first, then greatly moved; and at the end of the second air he summoned the musician, to his apartment, and, loading him with compliments and caresses, asked him how he could reward such talents, assuring him that he could refuse him nothing. Farinelli, previously tutored, answered that he desired nothing but that his majesty would permit his attendant to shave and dress him, and that he would endeavour to make his appearance in the council as usual. The king yielded, and from this time his disease gave way, and the musician had all the honour of the cure.[d]

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c Dr. Thomas.

"When griping grief the heart doth wound, and doleful dreams the mind oppress, then music, with its silver sound, with speedy help doth lend redress."—*Shakespeare.*

"Music, which gentlier on the spirit lies than tired eyelids upon tired eyes."—*Tennyson.*

"Music is the only sensual gratification wh. mankind may indulge in to excess without injury to their moral or religious feelings."—*Addison.*

d Dr. Kitto.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

the Philistines offer battle at Shochoh

1–3. (1) **Shochoh,** 11 miles S.W. of Jerus. and Bethlehem, now *Shuweikeh.*[a] **Azekah,** Jos. xv. 35. **Ephes-dammim,**[b] Pas-dammim; or the coast of D., now *Damum,* situated bet. the two. (2) **Elah,** formerly identified with Wady Beit Hanina, now with Wady-es-Sumpt.[c] The name is taken fr. terebinth tree. (3) **valley,** another word differing fr. that in *v.* 2, and meaning a *ravine.*[d]

The two champions.—The meaning of this scene. I. For Saul. 1. He was proud and disobedient; 2. God would welcome his return in penitence. II. For David. 1. Preparation for future; 2. Encouragement of faith; 3. God's help is real. III. For us. 1. Life a conflict: victories in youth prepare for conflicts of manhood; 2. Faith helps us when sight alarms us; 3. Evil always looks bigger than it is; 4. The young have giants to conquer—passion, temper, temptation, etc.

The scene of the combat.—We have been all night in the saddle, coming up from Joppa to Jerusalem. The city is yet two hours distant from us. The morning sun is just crowning the mountains of Judea with its golden light. Before us lies a deep valley, watered by a brook, running from the south-east to the north-west. The hills on both sides rise almost to the dignity of mountains. This scene is associated with an event of thrilling interest in Bible history; it is that of David's first triumph over the Philistines. As I here read the seventeenth of 2nd Samuel, how real it all appears! Over on that hill-side the hosts of Israel

a Beit Netuf is on a hill some 3 ms. nearly north of this, and between them is the deep Wady-es-Sumpt, wh. passes down the plain, by Timnath, to the great Wady Surar. Saul encamped prob. on the N. side; and it was into this wady that the champion of the 'uncircumcised' descended every day to defy Israel."—*Thomson.*

b 1 Ch. xi. 13.

c Robinson.

d "In one part the valley of Elah contracts into a glen (*v.* 52)"—*Stanley.*

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See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

"Nought is more honou able to a knight, nor better doth beseem brave chivalry, than to defend the feeble in their right, and wrong redress in such as wend awry."—*Spenser.*

• *A. G. Thomas.*

were drawn up in battle array; on this side the Philistines came up to bid them defiance. Down there, a little distant, Goliath of Gath—his helmet of brass, and his spear like a weaver's beam—advanced to challenge Israel. The two hills are so near, that in the clear atmosphere of such a morning as this those on opposite sides could easily converse with each other, and witness every movement of their antagonists. Twelve miles away, to the south-east, are the mountains of Bethlehem, where was the home of the young shepherd who came that bright morning into the camp of Saul, little dreaming of the honour that awaited him. Yonder sparkles the little brook as brightly as when he picked the smooth stones with which to smite the enemy. In the bed of the brook I also gathered five smooth stones, to take home with me to use in a lecture to my Sunday-school on "Giant-killing."[e]

the story of Goliath

his stature and weapons

4–7. (4) **champion,**[a] Heb. *a man bet. two;* "one who determines a national quarrel by offering single combat," **Goliath,**[b] *great,* or *an exile.* **Gath,** Jos. xi. 22. **six cubits,** *etc.,* prob. nine feet nine inches.[c] (5) **helmet,** defence of head.[d] **coat of mail,** corslet, quilted with leather or plates of metal. **5,000 shekels,** prob. 157 lbs. *avoirdupois.* (6) **greaves,** kind of metal covering rounded to the leg. **target,** a *javelin* a *dart.*[e] (7) **600 shekels,**[f] 17 or 18 lbs. **a shield,** lit. *the* shield.

The battle of life.—In fighting the battle of life we have giants to meet and overcome (intemperance, indolence, etc.). By noticing how David overcame Goliath, we may learn how to defeat our enemies. Let us look at the history before us and notice—I. The combatants. 1. Goliath. A giant: mail-clad: representative of enemies of God, and His truth. He may also be regarded as representing some monster evil (see intro.), armed with prestige, custom, etc. His victims are ruined, and his allies are doomed; 2. David. A stripling: a shepherd unversed in war: brave, honest, pious; the representative of the people and truth of God. May also be taken to represent those who honestly desire to do the right and fight for it. Armed with truth, conscience, Word of God, etc. II. The conflict. 1. The approach. Goliath boastful; regards his opponent with curses and contempt; looks upon victory as certain before a blow is struck. David, eager, runs to meet the enemy; armed with such weapons as he knows how to use: selects the best stone for his purpose: 2. The encounter. Picture the scene. Goliath couches his spear. David calls upon God and hurls the stone. Death of the giant. III. The victory: marked by three things. 1. The dismay of the Philistines; who thought the victory sure. Astonishment at seeing their champion fall. They retreat and are cut off by Israel; 2. The joy of the Israelites at their great deliverance. Their courage inflamed. One brave man will inspire many with courage; 3. David hailed as a nation's deliverer. Learn:—(1) Be not afraid if you are on the right side; (2) Rely on God who fights for you; (3) Use the best means to make the victory sure.[g]

Goliath of Gath.—Mark the value of this casual designation of the formidable Philistine—"of Gath." The report of the spies whom Moses sent into Canaan is given in Nu. xiii. 32, 33; in this Moses is a testimony unto us that these Anakites were a race of extraordinary stature. This fact borne in mind, turn to the Book of Joshua as a witness that, when he put the Anakites to

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• *A. G. Thomas.*

a Fr. Lat *campio.* fr. *campus,* a field.

b 2 Sa. xxi. 15—22; 1 Chr. xx. 4—8.

c "The *cubit,* the length fr. the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, is believed to be about 1½ feet, and the *span,* the distance fr. the thumb to the middle or little finger, when stretched apart to the full length, is half a cubit."—*Spk. Com.*

d "The Heb. word implies height, and roundness; whence we may infer the shape."—*Ayre.*

e Gesenius.

f Comp. 1 Chr. xi. 23, xx. 5.

g S. S. Address from the Hive.

"It is not thou who takest life: it is God, whose I shall be! And His, with God, whom here my heart defies. I glory in His power as in His love."—*Bailey.*

h Blunt's Undesigned Coincidences.

the sword he left some remaining in three cities and in no others, and one of these cities was Gath.[b]

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8—11. (8) **a Philistine,** *the* Phil., the famous champion, whose exploits you know about well. **for you,** to represent you. Saul's days of prowess were past, or he would have responded; and where was the brave and trustful Jonathan? (9) **your servants,** tributary to you. (10) **give . . fight,** form of challenge.[a] (11) **dismayed,** at his formidable appearance, and boastful language.[b]

The boastful challenge.—I. It sounded brave, but was really cowardly. He challenged all Israel to send a man, etc.; but he knew that the tallest would be as a dwarf by his side. II. It produced fear of man when it should have led to trust in God. III. It resulted in the humiliation of the challenger by the God of Israel sending a youth.

A sensible duellist.—Cobbett, when challenged to fight, recommended the challenger to draw a Cobbett in chalk upon the floor, and if he succeeded in hitting it, to send him instant word, in order that he might have an opportunity of acknowledging that, had the true Cobbett been there, he in all probability would have been hit too. But hit or not hit, the bullets could have no effect whatever, he maintained, on the original causes of the quarrel.

his challenge to Israel

a "The first challenge to a duel that we ever find, came out of the mouth of an uncircumcised Philistine."—*Jp. Hall.*

b "If, in ancient times, such a challenge was refused, the champion would parade himself within hearing of the enemy's lines, defying them in a loud, boastful, bravado style, and pouring out torrents of abuse and insolence to provoke their resentment."—*Jamieson.*

12—16. (12) **old man,**[a] this excuses his personal absence fr. the battle. (13) **followed Saul,** representing their father, and his house. (14) **youngest,** and evidently was treated as a child. (15) **went,** had gone. This was prob. before he became armour-bearer. (16) **presented himself,** *see v.* 11 and note.

Varieties in one family (*v.* 12).—I. The family—Jesse and his eight sons. II. Of these eight, four named and four unnamed (in this place). Often in families some come to the front while others make no name. III. Of the eight we have, afterwards, the names of seven (1 ch. ii. 13—15), of whom three have a complimentary mention—for the sake of David who was then king. The unnamed one had probably died. IV. Of the eight, the youngest and most despised became the most famous.

Duties of parents.—

> The voice of parents is the voice of gods,
> For to their children they are heaven's lieutenants;
> Made fathers not for common uses merely
> Of procreation (beasts and birds would be
> As noble then as we are); but to steer
> The wanton freight of youth through storms and dangers
> Which with full sails they bear upon, and straighten
> The mortal line of life they bend so often.
> For these are we made fathers, and for these
> May challenge duty on our children's part.
> Obedience is the sacrifice of angels,
> Whose form you carry.[b]

Jesse's family

a "Lit., 'And the man in the days of Saul was old, coming among the feeble,' *i.e.* declining to a place among the aged and feeble."—*Wordsworth.*

"It is a curious fact, that children are the best judges of character at first sight in the world. There is an old Scotch proverb, 'They are never cannie, that dogs and bairns dinna like;' and there is not a more true one in the whole collection."—*Hogg.*

b Shakespeare.

17—21. (17) **ephah,** in liquids, 7 galls. 4 pints: for dry goods, 3 pecks and 3 pints.[a] **parched corn,** Ru. ii 14. (18) **cheeses,** curdled milk.[b] **take their pledge,** bring back their assurance of health and safety. (19) **fighting,** the 2 armies seem to have fought daily, though no champion was found. The *v.* may, however, be a part of Jesse's speech to

Jesse sends David with presents to the camp

a Ayre. See also *Dict. of Bib., Smith.*

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David. (20) **trench,** place of the carriage.[c] (21) **in array,** ready for fighting.

Out of sight but not out of mind (*v.* 17, 18).—I. We have a father thinking of and making provision for absent members of his family. 1. Reminds us of presents from home sent to us at school; 2. Young man in city situation receiving home gifts; 3. Such gifts fragrant with country odours and home affection. II. Young men from home should seek to be worthy of all this care. III. The gifts of our heavenly Father to us who are fighting the battle of life. 1. Such gifts are to strengthen us; 2. Such a home worth fighting for.

A message of love from home.—A father in good circumstances, in one of the Eastern States, had a reckless son, who disgraced himself, and brought shame upon his family, by his misconduct. From home the prodigal went to California to become even more reckless. For years the father heard nothing from him. A chance offering, he sent this message to him: "Your father still loves you." The bearer sought him long, in vain. At last he visited a brothel, on his search, and there recognised the erring son. He called him out, and, at the hour of midnight, delivered his message. The gambler's heart was touched. The thought of a father that loved him still, and wanted to forgive him, broke the spell of Satan. He abandoned the game, his companions, and his cups, to return to his father. The heavenly Father sends a like message to every prodigal.

22—27. (22) **carriage,** baggage, as *vv.* 17, 18. **ran,** excited by the stir in the camp. (23) **came up,** to his daily parade of defiance. (24) **fled,** retreating back. (25) **give . . daughter,** comp. Jos. xv. 16. **free,** prob. fr. liability to special taxation in support of the monarchy. (26, 27) Intimates that Dav. conversed with first one and then another. **living God,** De. v. 26; Jos. iii. 10.

The reward offered (*v.* 25).—I. By King Saul to the champion of Israel. 1. Riches; 2. Influence, by a royal marriage; 3. Civil freedom. II. By the King of kings to the good soldier of Jesus Christ. 1. Durable riches; 2. A more blessed union; 3. A more lasting and glorious freedom.

Universality of patriotism.—A French writer informs us, that a native of one of the Asiatic Isles, amid the splendours of Paris, beholding a banana-tree in the Garden of Plants, bathed it with tears, and seemed for a moment to be transported to his own land. The Ethiopian imagines that God made his sands and deserts, while angels only were employed in forming the rest of the world. The Maltese, insulated on a rock, distinguish their island by the appellation of "The Flower of the World." The Javanese have such an affection for the place of their nativity, that no advantages can induce them, particularly the agricultural tribes, to quit the tombs of their fathers. The Norwegians, proud of their barren summits, inscribe upon their rix-dollars, "Spirit, loyalty, valour, and whatever is honourable, let the world learn among the rocks of Norway." The Esquimaux are no less attached to their frigid zone, esteeming the luxuries of blubber-oil for food, and an ice-cabin for habitation, above all the refinements of other countries.[a]

28—31. (28) An instance of the position too often assumed

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[b] "Oriental cheeses are very small, resembling in shape and size our penny loaves."—*Jamieson.*

[c] "Waggon rampart, constructed of the baggage of the army."—*Gesenius.*

Home is home, be it ever so homely. An Englishman's house is his castle.—*English.*—To every bird its nest is fair.—*French.*—East and west, at home the best.—*German.*

David hears of Goliath

"Love is the purification of the heart from self; it strengthens and ennobles the character, gives a higher motive and a nobler aim to every action of life, and makes both man and woman strong, noble and courageous; and the power to love truly and devotedly is the noblest gift with which a human being can be endowed; but it is a sacred fire that must not be burnt to idols."—*Miss Jewsbury.*

[a] *Goodrich.*

Eliab reproves

by elder brothers. (29) **a cause,**[a] he had come at his father's bidding, and with food for his brothers. (30) David spoke to one after another, hoping the matter would get to ears of Saul. (31) **rehearsed,** repeated.

Mistaken appearances of pride (*vv.* 28, 29).—It is not pride—I. When a man in power and government has a spirit suitable to his place and work: this is virtue. II. When natural strength and vigour of spirits expel pusillanimity, and when faith expels all inordinate respect and fear of men. III. When a wise man knows in what measure he is wise, and in what measure other men are ignorant or erroneous. IV. When a wise man desires that others were of his mind, for their own good and the propagating of the truth. V. When a holy person is conscious of his holiness and assured of his state of grace, and rejoices in it. VI. When we value our good name, and the honour which is indeed our due, as we do our other outward common mercies, not for their own sake, but as means of glorifying God.[b]

Is there not a cause?—We assert—I. That there is good cause for meetings of this kind. 1. They facilitate an interchange of ideas on our work, and familiarise us with various methods of teaching; 2. A free interchange of thoughts helps to enlarge and correct our views, to remove prejudices, etc.; 3. Discussions and criticisms upon present plans may lead to the discovery of better; 4. They not only provoke to love and to good works, but tend to mutual encouragement. II. That there is good cause why we should give ourselves to the work of teaching on the Lord's Day. 1. Because none better than their neighbours can talk so familiarly with the young on the subject of religion. It is an advantage to the cause of truth when others speak of the Bible than those alone whose profession leads them to do so; 2. Because the young could not be so effectually searched by the formal preaching of the Word as they may be by the simple conversation of a class; 3. Because our young people would be necessarily neglected, in great measure, if our S.Ss. did not gather and instruct them. III. That there is a good cause for supplementary work of this kind outside our secular work on the week-day. 1. Because the visiting of the sick and absent on the Lord's-day exclusively would absorb the time needed for our work as teachers, and for our public worship as private Christians; 2. Because meeting our scholars in their homes, at their studies or pastimes, may furnish us with an opportunity to obtain insight into character, as well as to speak a word in season; 3. Because the impression on a scholar's mind that his teacher thinks of him at other times than on the Lord's-day alone cannot but strengthen the ties that bind the teacher and scholar together. IV. That there is good cause why so much should be given and done in the S.S. enterprise. 1. Because, since the machinery of secular teaching is now being perfected, an institution designed to impart accurate Biblical knowledge should be as perfect in all its appliances as possible; 2. Because there is likely to be the greatest measure of true success where teachers diligently use the best material, and zealously strive to make themselves acquainted with the best methods. In conclusion, we may point to the multiplication of attractions that tend to draw the minds of youth away from religion, to the too great deficiency of parental training of the young in the ways of God, to the noticeable

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David, whose words are reported to Saul

a "It is only a *word* that I have spoken, I have not done any *act* of wrong."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 29. *R. Cecil, Wks.* ii. 301.

b R. Baxter.

Man is a *reasoning,* and should therefore be a *reasonable* creature. He should be able to give not only a "reason for the hope that is in him:" but also for the place he occupies and the work he is employed upon. David was ready with a reason. He suggested it by the question he proposed. He had temporarily abandoned his secular occupation, and when twitted for doing so, asked pertinently —"Is there not a cause?" Should any ask us why we meet at this time? Why we surrender our ease and pleasure on the Sabbath? and betake ourselves to labours outside our secular calling at other times? Or, why it is that so much is being *given* and *done* in the S. S. enterprise? Our reply shall be, "Is there not a cause?"

"The opinions of youth are frequently false and fervently expressed; of manhood, severe and carefully uttered; of old age, merciful and just.

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c Outline of Speech for S. S. Teachers' Convention.

David offers to fight Goliath

a "Itwas the habit of the wild animals to make incursions into the pastures of Judea. Fr. the Lebanon at times descended the bears. Fr. the Jordan ascended the lion, at that time infesting the whole of western Asia; these creatures, though formidable to the flocks, could always be kept at bay by the determination of the shepherds."—*Stanley.* *vv.* 34–37. *T. Cole, Mom. Ex.* iii. 471. *v.* 37. *Dr. D. Williams,* i. 127; *G. B. Blomfield,* 74. *b Topics for Teachers.*

David refuses Saul's armour and takes his sling

a "He carried a switch or wand in his hand, such as would be used for his dogs, and a scrip or wallet round his neck, to carry anything that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey."—*Stanley.*

b Dr. Thomas. You know when you shoot your arrow, if you wish to aim high you must send it with force from your bow; and so, if you wish

absence of direct appeals to the very young in the house of God, to the want of adaptation between the public services of the sanctuary and the youthful heart and mind, and then ask, in reference to the S.S. enterprise, "Is there not a cause?"[c]

32–37. (32) **heart fail,** *vv.* 11, 24. (33) **youth,** Dav. about 20 yrs. old, and fair. (34) **lion and bear,**[a] prob. on 2 diff. occasions. **a lamb,** or kid. (35) **beard,** or throat. (36) **living God,** this expression indic. Dav.'s *faith.* (37) Obs. the poetic form of expression.

An old friend in a new trouble (*v.* 32).—I. This not the first time that David had been a comfort to Saul. II. David no carpet-knight. He had a warrior's heart as well as the taste of a musician. III. David makes good his offer by recounting his past deeds. IV. David a true comforter since he shows that only God can save Israel.—*The endangered flock* (*vv.* 34–36).—I. The flock at rest, night, the attack, etc. II. The flock in danger. III. The flock defended and saved at the risk of the shepherd's life. IV. Israel the flock of Jehovah: and the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep.

The bear of Scripture, and its lessons.—I. Before the march of civilisation the bear disappears (hardly found in Palestine now): so the bear of Rev. xiii. 2 may be robbed of his power by knowledge, etc.; and so bear-like natures will be subdued by the Gospel. II. We should pray for good and wise rulers. "Teach our senators wisdom." (See the promise, Is. lx. 17.) III. The comparison between the bear and unrenewed man (Is. xi. 7) should teach the need of a change of heart (Ps. l. 10; John iii. 3). IV. David interposing on behalf of his flock may remind us of the Good Shepherd (John x. 11), and of the duty of befriending the weak; and David's protection in his perilous encounter (1 Sa. xvii. 34–37) may remind us of the promise (1 Pe. iii. 13).[b]

38–42. (38) **armed Dav.,** in anxiety for his safety. **his armour,** prob. the loose corslet, or coat of mail, was the chief thing, as this would fit a smaller man. (39) **assayed,** attempted, started to go. **proved,** tried, not *it,* but them, both the armour and weapons. (40) **brook,** wady. **bag,**[a] scrip for carrying daily food. (41) **man . . shield,** his armour-bearer. (42) **disdained,** despised.

David and Goliath (*vv.* 41, 42).—These two men give us a picture of—I. The forms of good and evil. Evil: gigantic, immense energy, imposing. Good: apparently small, weak, insignificant. II. The spirit of good and evil. Evil: proud, contemptuous, malignant. Good: humble trust on God. III. The weapons of good and evil. IV. The ultimate destinies of good and evil. Goliath, notwithstanding his great strength, proud vauntings, and mighty weapons, was slain. So it will be with evil.[b]

The sling.—The sling was much used by shepherds in repelling the assailants of their flocks, and in the use of which they often, like David, possessed extraordinary expertness. The sling of the ancient Egyptians, which was probably of the same sort as that of David, was a thong of leather or plaited string, broad at the middle, and having a loop at one end by which it was fixed upon and held firmly by the hand; the other extremity terminated in a leash, which escaped from the fingers when the stone was

thrown : and when used, the slinger whirled it two or three times round his head to steady it, and to increase the impetus. Besides stones and arrows, the Greeks threw heavy laden plummets from the sling. Some had a single or winged thunderbolt represented upon them ; and others bore the name of the person to whom they belonged, or a word, as (to translate it into English) "Take this ;" but simple pebbles, found on the seashore, or in the brooks, were usually employed ; the Egyptians used round stones for this purpose, which they carried in a small bag or scrip hanging from a belt over the shoulders.[c]

43—47. (43) **a dog,** "this kind of abusive dialogue is common among Arab combatants still." (44) **come to me,** the language of taunting. (45) Goliath was strong in *himself*, but Dav. strong in *God*. **whom . . defied,** not Is., but Is.'s God. (46) Dav. sends back his taunt but in altogether nobler form. (47) **this assembly,** the two armies. **sword and spear,** human weapons.[a]

A true spirit the pledge of victory in the battle of life (*v.* 45). —Introduction.—David and Goliath as ills. of good and evil (see outline above on *vv.* 41, 42). From the passage, we infer that a true spirit is superior. I. To the greatest material strength of our foes. II. To the greatest social prestige of our foes. III. To the completest accoutrements of our foes. IV. To the proudest vauntings of our foes. Conclusion—This spirit ensures victory because it—(1) Enables man to employ the best means ; (2) Enables man to use the best means in the best way : undaunted courage, invincible determination ; (3) Ensures God's aid in the best use of the best means.[b]

Goliath cursing David.—Men of high caste will not strike those that are of low caste with the hand, because the touch would defile them ; they therefore beat them with a stick or some other weapon. To offer to strike any person with a stick, then, is very provoking, and the person so struck will ask "Am I a dog?" When a man wishes to make another angry, he pretends to be looking for a stick, which will produce a similar question and feeling. Sometimes, however, they only repeat the proverb, "Take up a stick, and the dog will run off." As did the Philistine, so do these people curse each other by their gods.[c]

48—51. (48) **to meet,** come against for the purpose of fighting. Indic. how swiftly all this took place. (49) **hand . . bag,** as he ran. **slang it,** practice had made him very dexterous, and God guided the stone. **forehead,**[a] so stunned him. (50) **slew him,** began to slay. (51) **slew him,** completed his work ere the giant could recover fr. his blow.

A sling and a stone (*v.* 50).—I. The spirit in which David went to the encounter. 1. He went as a consecrated man ; 2. He was strengthened by the memory of past mercies ; 3. He went implicitly trusting God, but diligently using means. II. Some general truth suggested by the history—1. The wondrous disproportion between means and results in all God's works ; 2. The amazing importance of little things ; 3. Means employed in God's service must have God's approval. III. The allegorical improvement of the story. David, a type of Christ in his name—his birthplace—his early troubles—the reproaches of his brethren —his enemies—his giant foe—the tarrying of his success—his

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the arrow of prayer to reach to heaven, you must send it out in the earnestness of your spirit.

c Dr. Kitto.

Goliath curses David who avers his trust in God

a Ex. xiv. 13—18; Ju. vii. 2, 4, 7; 1 Sa. xiv. 6 ; Ps. xliv. 6.

Pp. 44—50. *Dr. T. Laurie, Lect.* 56.

v. 45. *J. Plumptre, Pop. Com.* i. 434; *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 170.

b Dr. Thomas.

"The rodomontade of Goliath is still the favourite way of terrifying an enemy. 'Begone, or I will give thy flesh to the jackals!' 'The crows shall soon have thy carcase.' 'Yes, the teeth of the dogs shall soon have hold of thee.' 'The eagles are ready.'"—*Roberts.*

c Roberts.

David slays Goliath

a "All pride comes forth with boldness of forehead; and therefore the wound was on the forehead, the seat of impious effrontery." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 50. *W. Reading,* iii. 395; *E. Blencowe,* i. 306.

b Preacher's Portfolio.

"It is an unhappy division that has been

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made between faith and works. Though in my intellect I may divide them, just as in the candle I know there is both light and heat; but yet put out the candle and they are both gone, one remains not without the other, so it is with faith and works."—*J. Selden.*

c Dr. J. H. Newman.

"Live as long as you may, the first twenty years are the longest half of your life."—*Southey.*

David brings the head of Goliath to Jerusalem

a Foss. identif. with *Tell-el-Sufiyeh.*

b Spk. Com.

"I am convinced the world will get tired, at least I hope so, of this eternal guffaw about all things. After all, life has something serious in it. It cannot be all comic history of humanity."—*Douglas Jerrold.*

Saul asks David of his lineage

v 58. See *Class and Desk. N. T.*, 97; also *Dr. Parker, Pulpit Notes* 180. Cicero was one day sneered at by one of his

final, complete, everlasting glory.[b]—*The call of David* (*v.* 50).—Observe—I. David was the son of a Bethlehemite, one among the families of Israel, with nothing apparently to recommend him to God; the youngest of his brethren, and despised by them. II. God chose him, whose occupation was that of a shepherd; for He chooses not the great men of the world. III. God chose David by means of the Prophet Samuel. He did not think it enough to choose him silently, but He called him by a voice. IV. What followed when Samuel had anointed David: "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David." V. Though he received the gift of God's Holy Spirit, yet nothing came of it all at once. He went back to his sheep. VI. Who is our Goliath? who is it we have to contend with? VII. What we ought to do when assailed by Satan.[c]

A difficulty solved.—A gay young man, travelling in a stage coach to London, forced his deistical sentiments on the company, by attempting to ridicule the Scriptures; and, among other topics, made himself merry with the story of David and Goliath, strongly urging the impossibility of a youth like David being able to throw a stone with sufficient force to sink into the giant's forehead. On this he appealed to the company, and particularly to a grave quaker gentleman, who sat silent in one corner of the carriage. "Indeed, friend," replied he, "I do not think it at all improbable, if the Philistine's head was as soft as thine." This grave rebuke reduced the young man to silence.

52—54. (52) **shouted**, in excitement of so sudden and glorious a triumph. **valley**, *see v.* 3. **Ekron**, Jos. xiii. 3. **Shaaraim**, Jos. xv. 36. **Gath**,[a] *v.* 4. (53) **chasing**, pursuing hotly. (54) **Jerusalem**, perhaps this done later. There is reason to think that Jerus. was at this time in the hands of the Jebusites. **tent**, prob. the tabernacle of God.[b]

The victory of one leads to the success of many (*v.* 52).—I. This is true of modern successes. They were heralded by the victory of one. Many succeed now through the victories of Columbus—Arkwright, Watt, etc. II. Especially true of Christ and His church. We succeed because He conquered.

We are influenced unconsciously.—Every little act we perform, every little word we speak, has an influence sooner or later upon ourselves or our associates. And yet how little we realise the importance of being watchful even in trifles! It is related in an old fable that the thistle once said to the thorn, "Ho, friend, are you a bud, for thus your fragrance bespeaks you?" "No," was the reply, "I am only a humble, scentless thorn: but I have dwelt some time with the rose." How vividly and beautifully this fable illustrates the mystery of unconscious influence! Let us apply it to our own hearts.

55—58. (55) **Abner**, ch. xiv. 50, 51. **whose son**, Saul had not recognised him. He may have only had the services of Dav. as a minstrel occasionally. (56) **stripling**, diminitive of *strip*, as if a small strip fr. the main stock, or stem. (57) **took him**, called him aside. (58) **son**, a young man is more spoken of in E. countries by his father's name than by his own.

Whose son art thou? (*v.* 58).—I. The scope of the question. You are a son of—1. Old England; 2. Of pious parents; 3. Of poor or rich ancestors, etc.; 4. Of God, or of the evil one.

II. What should be the accompaniments of the answer? III. Seek to be a son of God, and like the Divine Father.

Honourable descent.—A newly-arrived English tourist requested a gentleman of Philadelphia to introduce him to some distinguished foreigners with whom he might associate without compromising his dignity—some who had "descended from great houses." The gentleman promised to do so, and the next day formally introduced him to three hod-carriers, who were just in the act of descending from a great house in process of erection. The Irish were better pleased, than the aristocratic snob from England.[a]—*Boast of ancestry.*—

> Were honour to be scann'd by long descent
> From ancestors illustrious, I could vaunt
> A lineage of the greatest, and recount
> Among my fathers, names of ancient story,
> Heroes and god-like patriots, who subdued
> The world by arms and virtue;
> But that be their own praise:
> Nor will I borrow merit from the dead,
> Myself an undeserver.[b]

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opponents, a mean man of noble lineage, on account of his low parentage. "You are the first of your line," said the railer; "and you," rejoined Cicero, "are the last of yours."

a American.

"The man who has not anything to boast of but his illustrious ancestors, is like a potato — the only good belonging to him is under ground."—*Sir T. Overbury.*

b Rowe.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

the friendship of David and Jonathan

1—4. (1) **knit,**[a] bound to, in affection and friendship. (2) **took him,** to attend upon him. Comp. ch. xvi. 19—23. (3) **covenant,** mutual understanding, and engagement. (4) "To receive any part of the dress wh. had been *worn* by a sovereign, or his eldest son and heir, was esteemed the highest honour."

Saul's envy of David (*v.* 9).—Consider—I. Its grounds. It is the grudging to another the possession of some good, which we ourselves affect. II. Its operation. It produces in all a permanent aversion to the person envied. III. Its cure. We may all impede its influence over our own hearts by—1. Contemplating the vanity of earthly distinctions; 2. Cultivating the knowledge of our own hearts; 3. Seeking a thorough conversion unto God. Address—(1) Those who indulge this malignant spirit; (2) Those who are the objects of it.[b]

Past remembrances.—In Tavernier's *Travels* there is a striking history of a lad whom the great Shah Abbas, when out hunting in the mountains, found playing on a pipe as he tended a flock of goats. Struck by the intelligence of his answers, the king took him under his protection, and, after employing him in various capacities, ultimately made him nazar, or lord steward of the household. When the king died, the ear of his successor was poisoned with insinuations against the integrity of the nazar, as if he had enriched himself at the expense of the treasures entrusted to him. But, on opening the room in which the nazar's dishonest wealth was supposed to be deposited, nothing was found but his shepherd's weeds and sheep-hook, his pipe, his water-bottle, and the scrip in which he used to put his victuals—all hung up against the wall. The nazar, observing the king's astonishment, said, "When the great Shah Abbas found me in the mountains, keeping goats, these were all my possessions; and he took nothing from me. All else, called mine, I owe to his and **your bounty,** and you may justly reclaim it; but allow me to re-

a Ge. xliv. 30.

See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

v. 1. *H. Stebbing,* iii. 365; *W. Short,* 311; *R. W. Dibdin,* 44.

v. 3. *P. Holland,* ii. 177.

b C. Simeon, M.A. "Ancient peers represent their heroes as exchanging armour in token of friendship; and in Eastern countries a prince can scarcely bestow a greater mark of his favour than by the gift of some article of his dress, especially if he has already worn it." Some years since, a venerable man, upwards of one hundred years old, was the subject of converting grace in America. The cause of his con-

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version was hearing a text of Scripture which his pious mother had taught him in England one hundred years before.

David's prudence and popularity, and Saul's jealousy

a Gesenius. vv. 6—10. *W. B. Collyer. Scrip. Facts,* 392.

v. 8. *J. Saurin, Disc Hist.* iv. 365

b Dr. Parker.

In the mountains of Tyrol, it is the custom of the women and the children to come out, when it is bedtime, and sing their national songs until they hear their husbands, fathers, or brothers answer them from the hills, on their return home.

"Glory, the casual gift of thoughtless crowds! Glory, the bribe of avaricious virtue!" —*Johnson.*

Saul attempts the life of David

a This explan. is supported by *Gesenius, Keil, Wordsworth,* but said to be impossible by *Syk. Com.* Comp. 1 Ki. xviii. 29; Jer. xxix. 26.

"This remarkable instance of tain that which belongs to my original condition, to which I shall now cheerfully return, since I no longer enjoy your confidence." The king, touched with admiration and remorse, instantly caused himself to be disarrayed of his outer robes, and gave them to the nazar; "which," as Tavernier remarks, "is the greatest honour that a king of Persia can bestow upon a subject." This little anecdote illustrates several points in the early history of David.

5—9. (5) **behaved,** conducted himself. **accepted,** bec. of his triumph over Goliath, and bec. of his wise conduct. (6) **women,** comp. Ex. xv. 20; Ju. v. 1, xi. 34. **tabrets,** timbrels, Ge. xxxi. 27. **instruments,** *etc.*, lit. triangular instruments.[a] (7) **answered,** they sang in strophe and antistrophe. Comp. Miriam's song. (8) **have more,** if thus he has the love and praise of the people. (9) **eyed David,** invidiously, but making no present signs of his feeling.

The discipline of an anointed man (*v.* 9).—Four things are shown by this history. I. That great honours are often followed by great trials. II. That great trials generally bring unexpected alleviations. III. That no outward trials can compare in severity with the self-torment of wicked men. IV. That great trials, though calling for self-scrutiny, may not call for self-accusation.[b]

Welcoming the victors.—This is quite characteristic of the manners of the East. Everywhere in that part of the world the people are accustomed in this manner to hail the arrival of those who have been any time absent from them. More especially do they do so on the return of a victorious army. Multitudes then issue from the towns and villages through which they are expected to march, in order to form a triumphal procession to celebrate their valour; the principal part being composed of women and children, who band together, and as they go along gratify the heroes with dancing, music, and songs in honour of their martial deeds, particularly of such of the chiefs as have greatly distinguished themselves. We find this custom in Persia, Turkey, etc. Mr. Campbell, the missionary, witnessed it even in Africa. When he was leaving the city of Lattakoo, he fell in with a party of men who were returning from a distant expedition, after an absence of several months. The news of their approach had reached the town, and the women were hastening to meet them. On joining the party, the females marched at their head, clapping their hands and singing with all their might, till they arrived at their homes in the town.

10—16. (10) **the morrow,** not lit. the next day. **evil spirit,** his melancholy mania. **prophesied,** prob. he *raved.*[a] (11) **cast,** prob. brandished it, in a dangerous way. (12) **afraid of,** jealous of. He does not seem to have yet known of his anointing; but Dav. was evidently the rising man. (13) **from him,** *i.e.* fr. personal attendance. Poss. set him to active service, in the hope that he would be slain. (14, 15) **wisely,** prudently and successfully. (16) **loved Dav.,** Saul's plan only brought him before the people, who made him their hero.

Influence of music.—In the *Mémoires* of the French Royal Academy of Sciences for 1707 are recorded many accounts of the cases which, having obstinately resisted the remedies prescribed

by the most able of the faculty, at length yielded to the powerful impression of harmony. One of these is the case of a person who was seized with fever, which soon threw him into a very violent delirium, almost without any interval, accompanied by bitter cries, by tears, by terrors, and by an almost constant wakefulness. On the third day, a hint that fell from himself suggested the idea of trying the effect of music. Gradually, as the strains proceeded, the troubled visage relaxed into a most serene expression, his restless eyes became tranquil, his convulsions ceased, and the fever absolutely left him. It is true that when the music was discontinued its symptoms returned; but by frequent repetitions of the experiment, during which the delirium always ceased, the power of the disease was broken, and the habits of a sound mind re-established. Six days sufficed to accomplish the cure.

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the power of music over the mind, especially in soothing its perturbations and allaying its disorders, is in conformity with the experience of physicians, and with various intimations which may be found in ancient authors.

17—21. (17) Comp. xvii. 25. The fulfilment had been delayed, *see v.* 13. (18) The lang. of modesty and humility. (19) **Meholathite,**[a] for Meholah, *see* Ju. vii. 22; this an intentional insult to Dav. (20) **pleased him,** as giving him another chance of getting rid of his rival (*v.* 25). (21) **that she may be,** *lit.* and she shall be. **the twain,** should be, as Heb., this second time.[b] Neh. xiii. 20; Job xxxiii. 14.

Saul gives David his daughter Michal

a 2 Sa. xxi. 8.

b Gesenius.

Fight the Lord's battles (*v.* 17).—I. It is our duty to fight for God. 1. God Himself demands it of us; 2. His goodness to us demands it; 3. The justice of His cause demands it. II. The manner in which we should make the attack. 1. With prayer; 2. With confidence in God. III. The reward of our winning the battle. 1. Eternal peace; 2. Eternal life with God. Learn—(1) "Put on the whole armour of God;" (2) Trust not in your own strength: God is the ruler of battles.[c]

vv. 20, 21. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* ii. 129.

c Wm. Mowland.

"Faith is like the magnetic needle—often trembling, yet ever true; swayed, amidst the tempest's wildest tossings, by the invisible mysterious spell, which never fails to direct it right. It is computed there are about fifty thousand voyagers always upon the ocean. Who can describe the obligation these are all under to this constant, unerring guide?" — *Bowes.*

It is come to the Triarii.—When the Romans marshalled their infantry in order of battle, they placed the Hastati in the front, the Principes behind them, and the Triarii in the rear! If the first body (the Hastati) were overpowered, they fell back into the intervals of the second (the Principes) and renewed the fight with their assistance; but if the enemy was still too strong for these combined forces, their last resource was to fall back amongst the Triarii; and then altogether they made a last and more impetuous effort for success; but if the Triarii were defeated, a retreat was sounded and the day was lost. Hence it became a saying, "It is come to the Triarii," meaning, "It is come to the last push." But Cæsar's plan was to make his van strong, and to place but little dependence on his rear. Now, the Christian, when attacked by temptations, must fight in Cæsar's style. The ancient order of battle will not do for him. He must not yield an inch. If his van give way, all is lost. His rear will be always too weak to fall back upon; so, reversing the old Roman order of battle, he must strengthen and depend on his van (his Hastati), and never let it come to the Triarii.

22—27. (22) **be the king's,** *etc.*, indic. that Dav. had strongly resisted. (23) **poor man,** and so have no worthy dowry to give. (24, 25) **foreskins,**[a] these would prove that the persons killed were *uncircumcised* Philistines. (26) **not expired,** reference is prob. to some time fixed by Saul. (27) **full tale,**[b] the complete number.

Saul craftily sets David upon a difficult enterprise

a 2 Sa. iii. 14.

b Is. xliii. 1, 4.

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c S. S. Address from the Hive. "Faith may live in a storm, but it will not suffer a storm to live in it. As faith rises, so the blustering wind of discontented troublesome thoughts goes down. In the same proportion that there is faith in the heart, there is peace also: they are joined together. 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.'"—*A Divine of the 17th century.*

d Turner, Polynesia.

David's continued prudence and popularity

a "To avenge the act of Davi, and perhaps supposing (as the Rabbis suggest) that according to the Hebrew law he would claim exemption fr. warfare for a year after his marriage. De. xxiv. 5."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 29. *Dr. G. D'Oyly,* ii. 313; *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 186.

The pinnacle of a man's greatness is the height of his own character.

b Walker. "There can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes."—*Shakespeare.*

c J. Foster.

Lessons from past mercies.—Consider the great things God has done for us—I. In nature. 1. Given us a beautiful world to live in. Form, colour, fragrance, light. Fruit—all things good and useful; 2. Fitted us for this wonderful home. Minds to investigate, senses to enjoy, hearts to love, the wonderful and good things all about us. II. In Providence. 1. Put us in a Christian and free country; 2. Given to us happy homes; 3. Provided us with food, clothes, health, etc.; 4. Raised up friends, schools, teachers, etc. III. In redemption. 1. This stamps all the rest with a higher value; 2. A Saviour to die for us; 3. A Holy Spirit to renew us; 4. A Bible to guide and teach us; 5. A Christian Church to receive and watch over us; 6. A glorious heaven to live in for ever. Learn—(1) We are bound to be grateful to Him who has done these great things for us; (2) It is our duty to show our gratitude by practical service and devotion; (3) We should remind others of what God has done for them, and of their duty to Him; (4) Is our heart right with God?[c]

Wedding portions.—David objected to the proposal of being Saul's son-in-law on the ground of poverty. A Samoan would raise the same objection in the case of inequality in rank, owing to the difficulty he might have in getting up a dowry equal to that of the woman. The husband has to provide a dowry as well as the wife, and the dowry of each must be pretty nearly of equal value.[d]

28—30. (28) **saw and knew,** by such proofs of the Div. blessing as this recorded *v.* 27. (29) **continually,** not as before, in his jealous melancholy moods alone. (30) **went forth,**[a] to war.

Character the best security.—"I owe my success in business chiefly to you," said a stationer to a paper-maker, as they were settling a large account; "but let me ask how a man of your caution came to give credit so freely to a beginner with my slender means?" "Because," replied the paper-maker, "at whatever hour in the morning I passed to my business, I always observed you without your coat at yours." I know both parties. Different men will have different degrees of success, and every man must expect to experience ebbs and flows; but I fully believe that no one in this country, of whatever condition, who is really attentive, and, what is of great importance, who lets it appear that he is so, can fail in the long run. Pretence is ever bad; but there are many who obscure their good qualities by a certain carelessness, or even an affected indifference, which deprives them of the advantages they would otherwise infallibly reap, and then they complain of the injustice of the world. The man who conceals or disguises his merit, and yet expects to have credit for it, might as well expect to be thought clean in his person, if he chose to go covered with filthy rags. The world will not, and cannot, in great measure, judge but by appearances, and worth must stamp itself, if it hopes to pass current even against baser metal.[b] The equanimity which a few persons preserve through the diversities of prosperous and adverse life reminds me of certain aquatic plants which spread their tops on the surface of the water, and with wonderful elasticity keep the surface still if the water swells or if it falls.[c]

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

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1—3. (1) **kill David,** this had previously been his secret purpose. now it was *openly avowed* to the members of his court. (2) **delighted much,** *see* ch. xviii. 1. **morning,** by wh. time Saul's excited temper would probably be cooled, and Jonathan would be able to influence him. (3) **in the field,** place convenient for Dav. to hide in, yet overhear the conversation.[a]

The confidences of friendship (*v.* 3).—Learn—I. That the sins of parents may justly limit filial obedience. II. That there may be times and occasions when filial disobedience may be better for parents than obedience. III. That righteousness may distinguish the children of unworthy parents. IV. That friends should guard the interests of the absent.

Saul's threat to kill David (comp. *v.* 2 with xx. 2).—Now it must be confessed that at first sight there seems some incoherence between these passages. Let it be considered, however, that a danger often appears more imminent at first than it does after it has been repeatedly experienced and more narrowly scrutinised. Saul's first outburst of fury against David no doubt startled Jonathan, and alarmed him for his friend's safety; and under the impulse of this, he counselled David to hide himself lest his father should destroy him. But further experience showed him that Saul had no settled purpose at that time to destroy David; what he had done was the effect of a mere paroxysm of disease, and Jonathan might well hope that this might pass away, so as to leave David free from the risk to which at first he seemed exposed. Two things are mentioned which tended doubtless to encourage Jonathan to hold out this prospect to his friend. The one is that Saul had so readily yielded to his son's expostulations, and received David again into favour, after the earlier outbursts of his insane fury against him (xix. 4—6); the other is that Saul, who was in the habit of communicating all his purposes to his son, had never intimated that he had any purpose of destroying David (xx. 2, "my father does nothing," not "will do nothing"). These things considered, it will not appear incredible that Jonathan, who at first feared for his friend's life, and counselled him to hide himself until he should see what was in Saul's mind regarding him, should afterwards, under the conviction that Saul had no settled intention of destroying David, have endeavoured to dissuade the latter from permanently dissevering himself from the court by going into exile.[b]

4—7. (4) **spake good,**[a] both praised Dav., and dealt very faithfully with his father. (5) **life . . hand,** Ju. xii. 3; 1 Sa. xxviii. 21; "what is put into the hand may easily fall out."[b] **Philistine,** ch. xvii. **the Lord wrought,** therefore to treat in evil manner God's servant was insult to God.[c] (6) **sware,** readiness to make rash oath was one of Saul's weaknesses. (7) **called David,** after his interview with Saul. All went well while there was *peace* in the land.

Jonathan intercedes for David.—From which learn—I. The strength and duty of disinterested friendship. II. The obliga-

Saul resolves to kill David

a "He arranged this, prob., that in case the king broke forth into violence, or proved inexorable, David might be aware of it, and escape without incurring the danger of further personal communications."—*Kitto.*

Ps. xxxi. 8, 9.

"What is a friend but one whom I can trust; one who, in sorrow's hour, will mingle his tears with mine; one on whose support I can reckon when my back is at the wall?"—*Dr. Guthrie.*

"True happiness consists not in a multitude of friends, but in their worth and choice."—*Ben Jonson.*

"Nothing is more dangerous than a friend without discretion; even a prudent enemy is preferable."—*La Fontaine.*

b Dr. W. L. Alexander.

Jonathan intercedes for David

a Ps. cix. 5; Pr. xvii 13; Je. xviii. 20; Jo. x. 32.

b Wordsworth. *vv.* 4—6. *W. Snowden, Ss.* i. 123.

c Jo. xv. 25; Ps. xxxv. 19, cxix. 161, Ma. xxvii. 4.

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v. 6. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 200.

Kindred passions and pursuits are the natural groundwork of friendship. Real friendship is of slow growth, and never thrives unless ingrafted upon a stock of known and reciprocal merit. — *Chesterfield.*—The youth of friendship is better than its old age.—*Hazlitt.* —Make not thy friends too cheap to thee, nor thyself to thy friend. — *Fuller.* — Purchase not friends by gifts: when thou ceasest to give, such will cease to love.—*Ibid.*—Before you make a friend, eat a peck of salt with him. He is my friend who grinds at my mill.—*English.*

Saul attempts the life of David

a 1 Sa. xviii. 10, 11.

b Ps. lix., *title.*

" Insanity is, in a person awake, a false or mistaken judgment of things which, as occurring most frequently in life, are those about which the generality of men form the same judgment, and particularly is the malady evidenced when the judgment of the individual is very different from what he had himself before usually formed of the same object." — *Dr. Cullen.*

tions of gratitude. Even the heart of Saul under its influence. III. The power of a reasonable and dispassionate appeal to the best feelings of the heart. IV. The joy of reconciliation.

The grateful soldier.—The Rev. John Craig, a distinguished minister, and colleague of Knox, having gone to reside in Bologna, in a convent of Dominicans, found a copy of Calvin's *Institutes*, which God made the means of his conversion to the reformed faith. He was seized as a heretic soon after, and carried to Rome, where he was condemned to be burnt; but, on the evening preceding the day of execution, the reigning pontiff died, and, according to custom, the doors of all the prisons were thrown open. All others were released; but heretics, after being permitted to go outside the walls, were reconducted to their cells. That night, however, a tumult was excited, and Craig and his companions escaped. They had entered a small inn at some distance from Rome, when they were overtaken by a party of soldiers, sent to apprehend them. On entering the house, the captain looked Craig steadfastly in the face, and asked him if he remembered having once relieved a poor wounded soldier, in the neighbourhood of Bologna; Craig had forgotten it. "But," said the captain, "I am the man; I shall requite your kindness; you are at liberty; your companions I must take with me; but, for your sake, I shall treat them with all possible lenity." He gave him all the money he had, and Craig escaped. But his money soon failed him; yet God, who feeds the ravens, did not. Lying at the side of a wood, full of gloomy apprehensions, a dog came running up to him with a purse in its teeth. Suspecting some evil, he attempted to drive the animal away, but in vain. He at length took the purse, and found in it a sum of money which carried him to Vienna.

8—11. (8) **war again,** in wh. Dav., as a chief officer, must take part. His successes again aroused Saul's jealousy. (9) **evil spirit,** *see* ch. xvi. 14.[a] **played,** on his harp; this time music did not avail to soothe the king. (10) **even to the wall,** pinning him to the wall. The force of the thrust was shown by the javelin sticking into the wall. (11) **slay . . morning,**[b] Saul did not think of Dav.'s running away. Prob. the Eastern idea of the sanctity of the women's apartments prevented Saul entering the house at night.

The dangers of success.—I. That envious souls cannot endure the successes of another, even when they derive personal benefits from them. II. That envious thoughts being nourished give birth to murderous intentions.—*Saul's true friend.*—David, who —I. Discomfited Saul's enemy in the field. II. Soothed his troubled mind in the palace.—*Saul's enemies.*—I. Of his throne; the Philistines. II. Of his peace; envy. Note:—A man's greatest foes are the evil thoughts of his heart.—*David's friends.*—I. God who watched over him. II. His own alertness. III. The son and daughter of his bitter foe.

Music (*r.* 9).—"Music is one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God, to which Satan is a bitter enemy; for it removes from the heart the weight of sorrows and the fascination of evil thoughts. Music is a kind and gentle sort of discipline; it refines the passions and improves the understanding. Even the dissonance of unskilful fiddlers serves t set off the charms of true melody, as white is made more conspicuous by the opposition

of black. Those who love music are gentle and honest in their tempers. I always loved music, and would not, for a greater matter, be without the little skill which I possess in the art."[a]

Influence of musicians.—

Such was the bard, whose heavenly strains of old
Appeased the fiend of melancholy Saul.
Such was, if old and heathen fame say true,
The man who bade the Theban domes ascend,
And tamed the savage nations with his song;
And such the Thracian, whose harmonious lyre
Tuned to soft woe, made all the mountains weep.
Soothed even th' inexorable powers of hell,
And half redeem'd his lost Eurydice.
Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,
Expels diseases, softens every pain;
Subdues the rage of poison and the plague;
And hence the wise of ancient days adored
One power of physic, melody, and song.[b]

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a Luther.

"I was all ear, and took in strains that might create a soul under the ribs of death."—*Milton.*

"I'm never merry when I hear sweet music; the reason is your spirits are attentive."—*Shakespeare.*

b Armstrong.

12—17. (12) **through a window,**[a] so avoiding the officers who were patrolling the street, and the court of the house. (13) **image,** Heb. *teraphim,* household god.[b] **in the bed,** or *divan.* This was done to secure time for Dav.'s flight. **for its bolster,** or for its head, to give the appearance of hair. **covered it,** so producing appearance of person lying sick. (14, 15) **to see Dav.,** Saul evidently suspected some trick. (16) **come in,** near enough to examine. (17) **I kill thee,** pretending that Dav. had threatened her life.

Doing evil that good may come.—Note—I. Michal's love for her husband greater than her hatred of sin. II. Michal's fear of her father greater than her love of truth. III. Michal needs a stronger faith in God.

Formalism (*v.* 13).—If this hypocrisy, this resting in outward performances, were so odious to God under the law, a religion full of shadows and ceremonies, certainly it will be much more odious to do so under the Gospel, a religion of much more simplicity, and exacting so much the greater sincerity of the heart, even because it disburdens the outward man of the performance of legal rites and observances. And therefore, if we now under the Gospel shall think to delude God Almighty, as Michal did Saul, with an idol handsomely dressed instead of the true David, . . . we shall one day find that we have not mocked God, but ourselves; and that our portion among the hypocrites shall be greater than theirs.[c]

David escapes by the aid of Michal

a Comp. spies at Jericho, Jos. ii. 15—21; and Paul at Damascus, 2 Cor. xi. 33.

b "Ge. xxxi. 19; Ju. xvii. 5; 2 Ki. xxiii. 24. These teraphim may be compared to the tutelary or household gods of the Romans, the Penates, and Lares. Or to the pictures of St. Nicholas, or of the Virgin, wh. one sees in every Russian shop."—*Kitto.*

c. 13. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

c. 14. *Dr. N. Brady, A Ser.; E. M. Goulburn, Ser. to Sons of Clergy.*

c Chillingworth.

18–24. (18) **Ramah,** ch. i. 1. **Naioth,** distinct fr. Ramah, but near to it. "A suburb of Ramah, or perhaps the school buildings of the prophets there."[a] (19) **in Ramah,** indicating close proximity of the school to the town. (20) **prophesying,** a term including songs and religious ecstasies. **spirit . . prophesied,** they were seized with enthusiasm, and joined in the praises. (21) In thus sharing the excitement these messengers could not take David. (22) **Sechu,** great cistern, *Bir Neballah.* bet. Tuleil-el-Full and Neby Samwil.[b] (23) In state of high excitement. (24) **clothes,** weapons, and outer garment. **naked,** except for his shirt, wh. he did not remove.[c] *See* ch. x. 11.

David pursued by Saul to Naioth

a Winer.

"In its corrected form the name signifies *'habitations,'* and from an early date has been interpreted to mean the huts or dwellings of a school or college

Saul among the prophets.—I. A bad man in the company of

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of prophets over which Sam. presided. This interpretation is now generally accepted by the lexicographers and commentators." — *Smith's Bib. Dic.*

b Wordsworth.

c Kitto; Spk.Com., etc. Is. xx. 2; Mi. i. 8.

v. 24. *T. Morer, Ss.* 199; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kings* 17.

Ps. xxxv. 27. lii. 6, 7, lix. 16, 17.

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David's flight to Ramah to Jonathan

a 1 Sa. xix. 6.

v. 3. *J. Mahan, Ss.* 187; *A. Roberts, Ss.* i. 19; *C. Simeon*, ii. 569.

v. 4. *A. L. C. Coquerel, Ss.* 165.

b Ps. lxxxviii. 3, 4, cxliii. 7.

c Dr. Parker.

d J. Dun'op.

"Death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves. Calentures and surfeit, cold and agues, are the four the good. II. A bad man in good company with an evil intention. III. A bad man's evil intention supernaturally overruled.

An evil purpose thwarted.—The Rev. Hugh Clark, who was minister at Oundle, in Northamptonshire, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, having on one Lord's Day been faithfully denouncing the awful judgments of God against the dreadful sins of which many of his hearers were guilty, was visited on the following morning by a profane young man of his parish, who expressed a great wish to see him. Mr. C. invited him into his chamber, and, knowing his vicious character, very sharply reproved him for his sins, and warned him of the danger to which he was exposed. God so applied this faithful dealing to the heart of the young man, that, falling down on his knees, and entreating his pardon, he pulled out a dagger with which he had determined to murder him. "I came hither," said the man, "with a full resolution to stab you, but God has prevented me. This was occasioned by your terrifying sermon yesterday. But, if you please to forgive me, I shall, by the grace of God, never attempt any such thing again." Mr. Clark freely pardoned the offence; and, after giving him suitable advice, dismissed him.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1—4. (1) **fled**, while Saul was in his ecstasy: to Gibeah, for an interview with his friend. Jon. seems not to have known of this recent attempt of Saul's, and to have put undue confidence in the oath Saul had taken.[a] (2) **shew it me**, lit. *uncover mine ear.* Jon. was unwilling to believe so evil of his father. (3) Dav. had quicker discernment than Jon.[b] (4) *Say what is in thy mind.* Jon. yields to admit the poss. peril of his friend.

The nearness of death (*v.* 3).—"There is but a step," etc. This is true—(1) Physically: the point of a needle may destroy life; (2) Morally: one sin broke up human history into ruin and sorrow; (3) Socially: character being ruined, society is closed against a man; (4) Influentially: by one false step influence may be impaired or destroyed. The fact contained in the text should—I. Give high significance and value to time. Brief day—solemn destiny! II. Awaken the most anxious vigilance. Only *one* step, and it may be the *next*. III. Stimulate to preparedness for the future. IV. Impart a tenderer interest to all the relationships of life. We hold our blessings but for a moment. V. Lead to the right use of temporal possessions.[c]—*The mystic step* (*v.* 3).—I. A certain step: all must take it. II. An uncertain step; when we must take it we cannot tell. III. A final step: it puts an end to human distinctions. IV. A parting step: it parts us from this world. V. A solitary step: death a lonely thing—taken alone without friends, by some without God. VI. Altogether a solemn step. It conducts either to hell or heaven.[d]

Peace in death.—The ship has set sail, and kept on her course many days and nights, with no other incidents than those that are common to all. Suddenly land appears; but what the character of the coast may be the voyagers cannot discern through the tumult. The first effect of a near approach to land is a very great commotion in the waters. It is one of the coral islands of the South Pacific, encircled by a ring of fearful breakers at some little distance from the shore. Forward the ship must go: the

waves are higher and angrier than any they have seen in the open sea. Presently through them, partly over them, they are borne at a bound; strained, giddy, and almost senseless, they find themselves within that sentinel ridge of crested waves that guards the shore; and the portion of sea that still lies before them is calm and clear like glass. It seems a lake of paradise, and not an earthly thing at all. It is inexpressibly sweet to lie on its bosom after the long voyage and the barren ridge. All the heavens are mirrored in the water; and along its edge lies a flowery land. Across the belt of sea the ship glides gently, and gently touches soon that lovely shore. So many a Christian has been thrown into a great tumult when the shore of eternity suddenly appeared before him. A great fear tossed and sickened him for some days; but when that barrier was passed he experienced a peace deeper, stiller, sweeter, than any he ever knew before. A little space of life's voyage remained after the fear of death had sunk into a calm, and before the immortal felt the solid of eternal rest.[e]

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quarters of the year, and all minister to death; and you can go no whither but you tread upon a dead man's bones."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

They are rich who have friends. There is no living without friends.—*Portuguese.*

e Arnot.

5—10. (5) **new moon,** when special sacrifices were offered,[a] succeeded by feasting. All the courtiers were expected that day to dine at the royal table. The feast lasted two, poss. even three days. **the field,** prob. the one in wh. he had hidden before (ch. xix. 3). (6) It does not appear that Dav. went to Beth.; he hid in the field, and the excuse made was a deception.[b] (7) **peace,** it will evidence kindly intentions.[c] (8) Ch. xviii. 3.[d] (9) **from thee,** to think I would either betray or kill thee. (10) **who shall tell me?** how shall we communicate? Interviews might become dangerous to both.

The first law of life, and the law of society (v. 5).—I. Etiquette demanded the presence of David at the king's table. The exactions of society. II. Self-preservation required David to absent himself. The preservation of our higher life may require us to decline the honours of society.

The trials of life.—Life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials; but the perpetual recurrence of petty evils and small trials in the ordinary and appointed exercise of the Christian graces. To bear with the failings of those about us—with their infirmities, their bad judgment, their ill-breeding, their perverse tempers; to endure neglect when we feel we deserved attention, and ingratitude when we expected thanks; to bear with the company of disagreeable people whom Providence has placed in our way, and whom He has perhaps provided or purposed for the trial of our virtue: these are best exercises of patience and self-denial, and the better because not chosen by ourselves. To bear with vexation in business, with disappointment in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, intrusion, disturbance—in short, with whatever opposes our will, contradicts our humour—this habitual acquiescence appears to be more of the essence of self-denial than any little rigours or inflictions of our own imposing. These constant, inevitable, but inferior evils, properly improved, furnish a good moral discipline, and might, in the days of ignorance, have superseded pilgrimage and penance.[e]

Jonathan promises to inform David of danger

a Nu. x. 10, xxviii. 11—15.

b Comp. v. 19. Some comment., as *Kitto*, think Dav. went to Bethlehem.

c 1 Sa. xxv. 17; Est. vii. 7.

d Jos. ii. 14.

"Must I consume my life—this little life, in guarding against all may make it less? It is not worth so much!—it were to die before my hour, to live in dread of death."—*Lord Byron.*

"False friendship, like the ivy, decays and ruins the walls it embraces; but true friendship gives new life and animation to the object it supports."—*Burton.*

e H. More.

11—15. (11) **into the field,** so that privately they might decide on some plan of meeting. (12) Not a prayer to God, but calling on God to witness his faithfulness. **sounded,** tried to

the covenant of David and Jonathan

B.C. *cir.* 1062.

find out my father's intentions. (13) **send thee away,** finally from the court of Saul. (14) "Jon. had a presentiment, doubtless from God, that Dav. would be established on the throne."[a] (15) **my house,**[b] or family.

The prudence of Jonathan (*vv.* 14, 15).—I. To what end was it here directed? The safety of himself and posterity. II. By what was it prompted? By faith in David's future, and, probably, faith in God. III. What resulted from it? Note future history of his family—Mephibosheth. IV. The highest prudence requires us to be at peace with Jesus Christ.

Jonathan's covenant with David (*vv.* 14, 15).—It is impossible to read this without feeling something is wrong with the text. In the Syriac and Arabic versions the passage is rendered thus: "Would that this might be whilst I am still alive. But show me the kindness of the Lord before I die. And let not your kindness fail to my house," etc. This, in the opinion of recent critics, suggests the true reading, which is effected simply by the alteration of a point, viz., *v'lu* for *v'lo*. This makes the difference between "not" and "O that." And with this slight alteration all becomes clear. We may then render thus: "And oh that, if I still live, oh that thou mayest do to me the kindness of the Lord, so that I shall not die: and that thou mayest not cut off from my house for ever thy kindness, not even when the Lord shall cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the ground."[c]

16—17. (16) **made,** marg. *cut.* **require it,** *etc.*,[a] that is, may Dav.'s enemies punish any unfaithfulness to this covenant on the part of Dav. (17) Jon. made Dav. swear bec. he felt sure that in the future power and authority would be in *his* hands.[b]

Jonathan's love for David (*v.* 17).—He loved him as his own soul. Hence—I. He made provision for his present safety. II. Promoted his future prosperity. III. Sacrificed his own prospects for the advancement of his friend. IV. Compare this great love with yours for Jesus.

"*Friendship* (*v.* 17).—

I had a friend that loved me;
I was his soul: he lived not but in me.
We were so closed within each other's breasts,
The rivets were not found that joined us first,
That do not reach us yet: we were so mixed,
As meeting streams; but to ourselves were lost.
We were one mass: we could not give or take
But from the same; for he was I, I he.
Return my better half, and give me all myself,
For thou art all.
If I have any joy when thou art absent,
I grudge it to myself: methinks I rob
Thee of thy part.[c]

18—23. (18) **missed,** from the king's table. (19) **stayed three days,** at some convenient place, or at Bethlehem. **quickly,** diligently. **when the business was,** prob. refer. to ch. xix. 2—6. **Ezel,** Heb. *the stone of the way*, a sort of milestone. Dav. was to hide in a cavern or ruin near this stone. (20—22) This contrivance was made that the danger of another interview might be avoided. (23) **the matter,** of the covenant;[a] this was Jon.'s last word.

a Spk. Com.

b 2 Sa. ix. 1, 3, 7, xxi. 7.

"The literal rendering of the passage is, 'And not if as yet I live, and thou shalt not do towards me the kindness of the Lord, and I shall not die. And thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever, and not when God cuts off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the ground.'"—*Alexander.*

c Dr. W. L. Alexander.

friendship of David and Jonathan

a 2 Sa. iv. 7, xxi. 8; Je. li. 56.

b Song ii. 14.

"A man who loves only himself, without regard to friendship and desert, merits the severest blame; and a man who is only susceptible of friendship, without public spirit, or a regard to the community, is deficient in the most material part of virtue."—*Hume.*

c Dryden.

Jonathan's secret plan for informing David of danger

a Comp. Ge. xxxi. 49, 53.

"Sweet is the memory of distant friends!

The empty seat (*v.* 18).—I. Who once filled the seat? David—champion of Israel, son-in-law of Saul, harpist, etc. II. Why was it empty? Malevolent envy of the king. III. The empty chairs in our homes, and who once occupied them. How they are missed. IV. Learn to double our kindness to those who would be missed if their places were vacant.

The empty seat (*v.* 18).—"Thy place has long been empty among thy friends," or simply, "thy place been empty," or "has long been empty," are common expressions of compliment among the Persians, addressed to one who is again seen after either a long absence, or after such short absences as occur in the common course of life. The late King of Persia, for instance, used the expression as a gracious compliment to Sir John Malcolm at his first audience on his second embassy. One who returns from a journey, or who joins a circle of acquaintance whom he has **not** seen within the usual number of weeks or days, is greeted with the same phrase of compliment.

24—27. (24) **to eat meat,** at the special feast. (25) **by the wall,** place of honour.[a] Obs. that each of the chief officers had his appointed place at the table. **Jon. arose,** better read, *went first*, entered first to sit on Saul's right. (26) **not clean,** ceremonially.[b] (27) **son of Jesse,** custom in E. to call men by their father's name.

Unconscious tribute to character of the good (*v.* 26).—I. Saul did not suppose David would be absent through fear: recognition of courage. II. Nor did he attribute the absence to intention, but to some unavoidable circumstance. III. Or he supposed ceremonial uncleanness might be in the way: tribute to his piety. IV. Worldly men often unwittingly pay similar tribute to the good.

The new moon (*v.* 24).—No Persian would willingly commence a journey or any other business until the new moon had been perceived. Early on the nineteenth it was publicly and joyfully proclaimed that this event had occurred: the day was therefore considered as an important *eid*, or festival, and devoted by the true believers to gluttony, the delights of tobacco, and sensual gratifications of every kind. Presents were reciprocally given by relations, friend, and equals; and offered by servants to their masters with the usual compliment and wish. May this holiday be auspicious to you! On these occasions the gifts are not always of much intrinsic value; but a fruit, a flower, or a bit of sweetmeat, serves as a token of esteem or of respect.[c]

28—34. (28) **earnestly asked,** Jon. makes as good a repres. as possible. (29) **my brother,** eldest sons had great authority in the family. Jesse, too, was now very old. **get away,** release me for this little visit. (30) **son,** *etc.*,[a] Saul was put in a desperate passion on thus finding his secret plan defeated. No reason to think Jon.'s mother deserved the reproach. (31) Saul thought Jon. defeated his own interests by his friendship. (32) Trying to reason with a man in passion. **cast a javelin,**[b] answering with a blow. (34) **fierce anger,** at Saul's attempt on his own life.

The passionate man.—I. Has no regard for those nearest akin to him. Saul's wife, as well as son, reproached. II. Has no power of self-control. Saul passes from words to blows. III.

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Like the mellow rays of the departing sun, it falls tenderly, yet sadly, on the heart." — *Washington Irving.*

"Friendship is seldom truly tried but in extremes. To find friends when we have no need of them, and to want them when we have, are both alike easy and common."—*Feltham.*

Saul inquires concerning the absence of David

a "The left-hand corner, at the upper end of a room was, and still is, in the E., the most honourable place." — *Jamieson.*

b "The new moon, being a religious feast, no one could assist at it who had any ceremonial uncleanness upon him." —*Syk. Com.*

Le. vii. 21, xv. 5—10; Nu. xix. 11, 14, 16, ix. 6.

"The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie." — *Shakespeare.*

c Sir W. Ouseley.

Jonathan, defending David, is attacked by Saul

a "To an Oriental, nothing is so grievously insulting as a reproach cast upon his mother; so Saul, to sting his son to the uttermost, spoke contemptuously of his mother, regardless of the

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fact that Jon.'s mother was his own wife." — *Kitto.*

b "The person seated where Saul was had his *left* arm confined by the wall, but his *right* hand at full liberty." — *Jamieson.*

c Harmer.

"Smitten friends are angels sent on errands full of love; for us they languish, and for us they die."—*Young.*

David is warned by Jonathan

"We still have slept together, rose at an instant, learn'd play'd, eat together; and whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans, still we went coupled and inseparable." *Shakespeare.*

"Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul, sweetener of life, and solder of society, I owe thee much: thou hast deserved of me far, far beyond what I can ever pay."—*Blair.*

"The friendships of the world are oft confederacies in vice, or leagues of pleasure: ours has severest virtue for its basis, and such a friendship ends not but with life."—*Addison.*

a Gottwald.

David's flight from Saul

a 1 Sa. xxiii. 16. *v.* 42. *H. Lindsay. Lect.* i. 215.

b Ps. vi. 6, 7, xxxix. 12, lvi. 8; Ge. xxxi. 49; 2 Sa. xxiii. 18.

"Is aught so fair in all the dewy Men who cast off Divine control often subject themselves to the tyranny of passion or self.

Eastern resentment (*v.* 30).—"In the East, when they are angry with a person, they abuse and vilify his parents. Saul thought of nothing but venting his anger against Jonathan, nor had any design to reproach his wife personally; the mention of her was only a vehicle by which, according to Oriental modes, he was to convey his resentment against Jonathan into the minds of those about him."[c]—An instance of the prevalence of the same principle in Africa occurs in the travels of Mungo Park:—"Maternal affection is everywhere conspicuous among the Africans, and creates a correspondent return of tenderness in the child. 'Strike me,' said my attendant, 'but do not curse my mother.' The same sentiment I found universally to prevail, and observed in all parts of Africa that the greatest affront which could be offered to a negro was to reflect on her who gave him birth."

35—40. (35) **field,** *etc.*, *v.* 19. Jon. went, as if meaning to practise with his bow. (36) **beyond him,** to pass over him; this gave Jon. opportunity for shouting out the appointed signal for Dav. to hear. (38) **make speed,** *etc.*, this also intended for Dav., to indic. that the peril was urgent. (39) **anything,** of the secret sign they had made. (40) **artillery,** bow and arrows, with quiver.

The sound and the sense (*v.* 39).—I. This boy one of the lay figures of history. II. This boy unconscious of the service he was rendering. III. Words spoken to one are sometimes meant for another. IV. Words, by law of association, may be most significant to us, while not impressing those to whom they were addressed.

The unstrung lute—One evening, one of a company of friends despatched a servant to his house for a lute, and on its being brought to the apartment it had lost tune, as usually happens to these instruments when exposed to the changes of weather or atmosphere. While the owner was tightening the strings, Gotthold, who was present, thought within himself, What is sweeter than a well-tuned lute? and what more delightful than a faithful friend, who can cheer us in sorrow with wise and affectionate discourse? Nothing, however, is sooner untuned than a lute, and nothing is more fickle than a human friend. The tone of the one changes with the weather, that of the other with fortune. With a clear sky, and a bright sun, and a gentle breeze, you will have friends in plenty; but let fortune frown, and the firmament be overcast, and then your friends will prove like the strings of the lute, of which you will tighten ten before you will find one which will bear the tension or keep the pitch."[a]

41, 42. (41) **Dav. arose,** though very perilous, and beyond their intentions, the two friends could not endure to part without a last interview. **toward the south,** of the stone *Ezel*, *v.* 19. **bowed himself,** as to king's son, until, drawing nearer, all was forgotten in warmth of friendship. This they thought their final parting. The only other time they met was briefly, in the wilderness of Ziph.[a] (42) **go in peace,**[b] *i.e.* fear no evil from me.

Loyalty and friendship.—I. We learn that no excitements or

circumstances should make us forget the courtesies of life. David bowed before he embraced. II. We learn that formal courtesies yield to the feelings of the heart. David embraced as well as bowed. III. We learn that the homage of the heart to friendship yields us more pleasure than homage to title and office.

Friendship with Christ.—Among the cherished stories of old English friendship, is that of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, who wished to transmit his memory to after ages by the inscription on his tomb, "Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." The circumstance is not worth mentioning in comparison with that record of friendship which is supplied in the words, "That disciple whom Jesus loved," except as it may serve to bring out the Divine instance into bright and beautiful relief, through the manifest inferiority of the human example. The friendship of a mortal, however wise and good, fades away beside the thought of His friendship, who is the fountain of wisdom, and the mirror of goodness.[b]

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landscape of the spring? In the bright eye of Hesper in the morn, in nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair as virtuous friendship?"—*Akenside.* "You'll find the friendship of the world a show! Mere outward show! 'Tis like the harlot's tears, the statesman's promise, or false patriot's zeal,—full of fair seeming, but delusion all."—*Savage.*

b Dr. Stoughton.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

1—7. (1) **Nob,** the tabernacle was at this place, but not the ark. It was a town a little N. of Jerus., bet. it and Anathoth.[a] **Ahimelech,** comp. ch. xiv. 3. (2) This scheme of Dav. may be treated as a stratagem, a device necess. to secure his safety. **servants,** some were with him.[b] (3) **present,** *i.e.* whatever you have. (4) **hallowed bread,** the shewbread just replaced by the new loaves.[c] Le. xxiv. 5—9. (5) **manner common,** seeing it was removed fr. the table. (6) **hot,** newly baked. (7) **Doeg,**[d] tarrying for relig. purification at the tabernacle; to perform a vow; or poss. bec. it was the Sab.

The solitariness of being (*v.* 1).—I. David, a future king, alone: a fugitive, hungry. II. David's Lord knew what loneliness was. "Of the people there were none with Him." III. There is a sense in which our life is a lonely life. It is apart from and unlike all other lives.—*Necessity has no law* (*v.* 6).—I. Necessity may release one from ceremonial law (Ma. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26). II. Necessity does not release one from moral obligations. Better die than sin.—*Doeg the Edomite* (*v.* 7).—I. Scrupulous in the performance of his religious vows. II. Neglecting that mercy which is better than sacrifice. III. Revolving evil thoughts in a holy place.

True life.—The mere lapse of years is not life. To eat, and drink, and sleep—to be exposed to darkness and the light—to pace round in the mill of habit, and turn thought into an implement of trade—this is not life. In all this but a poor fraction of the consciousness of humanity is awakened; and the sanctities will slumber which make it worth while to be. Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone can give vitality to the mechanism of existence. The laugh of mirth that vibrates through the heart; the tears that freshen the dry wastes within; the music that brings childhood back; the prayer that calls the future near; the doubt which makes us meditate; the death which startles us with mystery; the hardship which forces us to struggle; the anxiety that ends in trust; are the true nourishment of our natural being.[e]

David obtains the hallowed bread

a "Long before the conquest of Jebus by Dav., the northern summit of Olivet had, it would seem, under the name of Nob, been selected as the seat of the tabernacle after the destruction of Shiloh and the loss of the ark."—*Stanley.*

b Mk. ii. 25, 26.

c "This was the Sab. day; on any other day bread might have been baked to meet any want that arose, but this could not be done on the Sab., and there was hence no bread to be had but the shew-bread, which would have sufficed for the priests."—*Kitto.*

d De. xxiii. 7, 8.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.; J. Saurin,* iv. 353.

e J. Martineau.

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David obtains the sword of Goliath

8–10. (8) **neither . . me,** the real reason was that he had not dared to return to Gibeah after the last interview with Jon.[a] (9) **of Goliath,** ch. xvii. 51, 54. **Elah,** ch. xvii. 2. **cloth,** or in the cloak, *i.e.* Gol.'s milit. cloak. **ephod,**[b] part of high priest's dress, put on when he was consulted as oracle, Ex. xxviii. 6—30. (10) **Achish,** called also *Abimelech.*[c] **Gath,** the Phil. town nearest to Judah.[d]

The Christian minister entering on his duties (*v.* 8).—I. The work for which the Christian minister is begirding himself is one for which the utmost human resources, natural and acquired, are wholly inadequate. This appears from—1. The magnitude of his undertaking; 2. The dispatch with which it must be executed. II. Though human resources be of themselves insufficient and unavailing for such a work, we have yet ample grounds of encouragement in the Word and grace of God.'—*The king's business* (*v.* 8).—I. Jesus Christ—the Prince of Peace and Life—is the great King. II. His business is the redemption of men. III. The publishing of this redemption is a business committed to us. IV. This business requires haste, zeal, promptitude, dispatch. (1) Life is short; (2) Souls are perishing; (3) Christ is waiting till His souls be made His footstool; (4) The judgment-day approaches.

The consecration of war trophies (*v.* 9).—To the jewels of silver and gold, which the Hebrew soldier was accustomed to bring as a free-will offering into the treasury of his God, must be added the armour of some illustrious foe, which, in gratitude for his preservation, he suspended in the sanctuary. The sword of Goliath was wrapped up in a cloth, and deposited behind the ephod; and in a succeeding war, the Philistines, proving victorious, took their revenge by depositing the armour of Saul in the temple of Ashtaroth. The custom of dedicating to the gods the spoils of a conquered enemy, and placing them in their temples as trophies of victory and testimonies of gratitude, is very ancient, and universally received in Asia and Greece. Hector promises to dedicate his enemy's armour in the temple of Apollo, if he would grant him the victory: "But if I shall prove victorious, and Apollo vouchsafe me the glory to strip off his armour, and carry it to sacred Troy, then will I suspend it in the temple of the far-darting Apollo." Virgil alludes to this custom in his description of the temple, where Latinus gives audience to the ambassadors of Æneas.—(*Æn.* lib. vii. l, 183). "Besides, on the sacred doorposts, many arms, captive chariots, and crooked cimetars are suspended, helmets, crested plumes, and massy bars of gates, and darts, and shields, and beaks torn from ships."[f] Nor was it the custom only to dedicate to heaven the weapons taken from an enemy; when the soldier retired from the tumults of war into the bosom of his family, he frequently hung up his own arms in the temple, as a grateful acknowledgment of the protection he had received, and the victories he had won. In this custom, the Greeks and Romans imitated the Asiatic nations, and particularly the Hebrews; for when David resigned the command of his armies to his generals, he laid up his arms in the tabernacle, where they continued for several ages; and there is reason to believe his conduct in this respect was followed by many of his companions in arms. When Joash, one of his descendants, was crowned, Jehoiada, the high-priest, under whose

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[a] 1 Sa. xx. 42.

[b] "The ephod was that partic. part of the high priest's dress wh. was necess. to be worn when he inquired of God by Urim and Thummim."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] Superscrip. of Ps. xxxiv.

[d] "Dav. was hard pressed, and had only a choice of dangers. Gath was near his native mountains, and prob. had more friendly relations with Is. than the more distant cities of the Phil."—*Dr. Thomson.*

v. 10. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* 230.

v. 8. *Dr. Talmage, Ss.* ii. 242.

v 9. *Dr. Talmage' Ss.* ii. 251.

e J. Lee.

f Æn. viii. l, 183.

"Justice is in general only a lively apprehension of being deprived of what belongs to us; hence arise our great consideration and respect for all the interests of our neighbour, and our scrupulous care to avoid doing him an injury."—*Rochefoucauld.*

care he had been educated, delivered to the captains of hundreds, spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been King David's, which were in the house of God.[g]

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g Paxton.

11—15. (11) **king of the land,**[a] not actually king, nor did they know of Sam.'s anointing; but the most kingly, the greatest captain. **sing,** *etc.*, see ch. xviii. 7. (12) **laid up,** *etc.*, thought them over, and felt they indicated that he was not safe. (13) **behaviour,** lit. *changed his sense or reason,*[b] acted as if mad. **scrabbled,** scrawled, made marks. **doors,** *etc.*, of Achish's palace. **spittle,** *etc.*,[c] this in the E. is regarded as an intolerable insult. (14, 15) Dav.'s conduct produced disgust, and he was sent away fr. the palace.

Assumed madness.—

I have bethought myself,
To take the basest and the poorest shape,
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
Blanket my loins: put all my hair in knots;
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds, and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voice,
Strike into their numb'd and mortified bare arms,
Pins, wooden pegs, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible aspect from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometimes with prayers,
Enforce their charity.[d]

David flees to Achish and assumes madness

a "Dav. prob. was recognised thro' having Goliath's sword."—*Jamieson.*

b Gesenius.

c "This last was convincing. Considering the regard in wh. the beard is held, the care taken of it, and the solicitude of the owner to protect it fr. insult and pollution, who could poss. doubt the abject and absolute madness of the man who thus defiled his own beard?"—*Kitto.*

d Shakespeare.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

1—5. (1) **Adullam,** about 6 m. S.W. of Bethlehem. The limestone cliffs of *Lekieh* and *Deir Dubbân* on the edge of the plain are pierced with caves.[a] **father's house,** *etc.*, now in peril through Saul's enmity. (2) This *v.* indicates that Saul's temper and tyranny were producing discontent among the people. (3) **Mizpeh,** watch-tower, referring to some *fort;* the site is not identified. He had family connection with Moab through *Ruth.*[b] (4) **hold,** prob. the *Mizpeh* of *v.* 3. (5) **Gad,**[c] first mentioned here. Poss. sent by Sam. **Hareth,** site unknown.

David escapes to Adullam

a Stanley.

b Ru. i. 2, 4, iv. 21, 22.

c "Brought up, prob., in School of Proph., under Sam., informed that Dav. had been anointed; afterwards called Dav.'s seer (2 Sa. xxiv. 11), and the chronicler of his acts (1 Chr. xxix. 29)."—*Wordsworth.*

d Dr. Burns.

"An outlaw is one deprived of the benefit of the law, and out of the king's protection; a punishment for such as being called in law di contemptuously refuse to appear.

David and the cave of Adullam (*v.* 2).—Observe—I. The description given of those who came to David. 1. The distressed: those in trouble; 2. Those in debt: afraid of creditors; 3. The discontented: "bitter of soul." It is a good thing when men become discontented with their Satanic master, with their bad work, their fearful wages. II. What these persons did: "gathered themselves unto" David. It is obvious—1. That they knew about David; 2. That they had decision, or they might have deferred; 3. That they subjected themselves to his will and pleasure. III. What David became to them: captain and leader. Sinners coming to Christ—1. Are saved from distress; 2. Are delivered from debt; 3. Obtain the spirit of joy from their anguish of heart (Is. lxi. 3); 4. Are the loyal soldiers of the Saviour.[d]

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In the reign of Edward III., all the judges being agreed that none but the sheriff only, having lawful warrant therefor, should put to death any man outlawed."—*Cowel.*

One of the most noted of English outlaws was Robin Hood, who, with his band, infested the forest of Sherwood. Some writers assert that this was only a name assumed by the Earl of Huntingdon, who was disgraced and banished by the court of Richard I., at his accession. He and his friend Little John, continued his depredations from about 1189 to 1247, when he died.

[e] *Dr. Bonar.*

Saul receives the report of Doeg

[a] "'Under the terebinth on the hill,' or high place, of Gibeah. Saul's own city."—*Wordsworth.*

"Under the tamarisk tree on the high place, where he always held such meetings. It was a kind of parliament in the open air."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] Ps. lii. 2—4.

v. 9. "Here the backbiter concealeth the necessary circumstances, whereby Ahimelech might have been excused, as that David asked bread being hungry, and that he told not Ahi-

The cave of Adullam (*v.* 1).—We had conceived of the cave as an immense recess in the rock, like Fingal's cave in Staffa; but here we saw nothing of this. It is an innumerable succession of arched chambers, like the crypts of a cathedral. These are the "sides of the cave" in which David and his men concealed themselves (1 Sam. xxiv. 3), nor can anything be imagined more suitable for concealment. Hundreds of men could be in these "sides," and yet a person entering the cave would not be aware of their presence. Each chamber is a stately hall, on all sides of which the rocks drop down like Gothic pillars, leaving only here and there gateways by which you pass into the adjoining chambers. You might spend days in exploring these vast apartments, for the whole mountain seems excavated, or rather honeycombed. The quantity of air or gaseous substance generated and imprisoned here, when the mass was fluid, must have been enormous, indicating, perhaps, the presence of some peculiar matter in the composition of the limestone, which a geologist, or at least a chemist might detect. We did not penetrate into the interior very far; still we groped our way through the passages into a good many of these apartments, and found them all much alike. Sticking some wax lights which we had, here and there, on some little projection, we kept up communication with the outer chamber, so as to have no difficulty in finding our way out. In some places, we observed stalactites; though these were not numerous, owing probably to the great dryness of the rock. The air was intensely hot, but quite fresh and dry. The stone is very much like the usual limestone of Syria, of a white or cream colour, which not only makes the cave more easily lighted, but gives a cheery brightness to the chamber.[e]

6—11. (6) **discovered,** it was found out to what district he had escaped. **tree,**[a] or under a grove on a hill, fixing his court under some shady canopy. **spear,** the sceptre, or sign of his royalty. (7) **ye Benjamites,** showing it was a meeting of the tribe. (8) Jealous of Dav. and of his own son, Saul now becomes suspicious of his people, thinks all are set against him. (9) **Doeg,**[b] ch. xxi. 7. (10) **inquired,** *etc.*, denied (*v.* 15). (11) **sent to call,** evidently in a heat of passion; glad to get some one to vent his rage on.

The informer (*vv.* 9—11).—Doeg—I. Was moved by sycophancy. II. Was ready to tell the worst he knew. III. Was criminally reticent on extenuating circumstances. IV. Was himself ready to perform deeds of cruelty.

Saul's camp (*v.* 6).—Yet strange as this may appear to us, it is natural enough according to the present customs of the East, where we know the solemnity and awfulness of superiority is kept up as high as ever. Thus, when Dr. Pococke was travelling in the company of the governor of Faiume, who was treated with great respect as he passed along, they passed one night, he tells us, in a grove of palm-trees. The governor might, no doubt, had he pleased, have lodged in some village; but he rather chose a place which we think very odd for a person of figure. The position of Saul, which was on a high place, according to the margin, reminds me of another passage of this author, where he gives us an account of the going out of the caya, or lieutenant of the governor of Meloui, on a sort of Arab expedition, towards a place where there was an ancient temple, attended by many

people with kettledrums and other music: the doctor visited that temple, and upon his return from it went to the caya, he says, "whose carpets and cushions were laid on a height, on which he sat with the standard by him, which is carried before him when he goes out in this manner. I sat down with him, and coffee was brought: the sadar himself came after, as incognito." Saul seems, by the description given, as well as by the following part of the history, to have been pursuing after David, and stopping, to have placed himself, according to the present Oriental mode, in the posture of chief. Whether the spear in his hand, or at his hand, as it might be translated according to Noldius, and as appears by the use of that prefix in Ezek. x. 15, was the same thing to Saul's people that the standard was to those of the caya, I know not: if it was, there is a third thing in this text illustrated by the doctor's accounts—the stopping under a tree or grove; the stopping on a high place; and the sacred historian's remark, that he had his spear by him. It is certain that, when a long pike is carried before a company of Arabs, it is a mark that an Arab sheik, or prince, is there, which pike is carried before him; and when he alights, and the horses are fastened, the pike is fixed, as appears by a story in Norden.[c]

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melech that he was out of Saul's favour: but he turneth all his speech to this end, to bring the priest into suspicion with Saul."—*Perkins.*

"An inward sincerity will of course influence the outward deportment; but where the one is wanting, there is great reason to suspect the absence of the other."—*Sterne.*

c Harmer.

12–16. (12) **hear now,** spoken in great excitement. (13) **rise against me,** Saul regarded Dav.'s company of warriors as proof of his rebellion. (14) The priest answers simply, according to his knowledge, and tries to soothe Saul. **thy bidding,** so Dav. told him.[a] (15) It appears that, lawfully, inquiries could only be made by the chief rulers. The priest denies having thus helped David. (16) **die,** a most tyrannous and wicked decision.

Saul charges Ahimelech with conspiracy

a 1 Sa. xxi. 2.

The trial of Ahimelech.—I. His accuser—Saul. II. The offence with which he was charged—conspiracy, rebellious employment of official functions. III. Ahimelech's defence. 1. A denial of any conspiracy; 2. Explanation of his treatment of David on the ground that he was the king's son-in-law; 3. Denial of misuse of official functions: 4. Assertion of ignorance of David's relations with the king. IV. The sentence: unjust—1. Because that of the accuser, who becomes at once judge and jury; 2. Because based on the evidence of one, while the law required at least two witnesses; 3. Because it included a punishment—death—not allowed for such an offence; 4. Because it determined the death of innocent persons; 5. Because it was an act of private revenge. Learn:—(1) The evils asssociated with despotic monarchies; (2) The great advantage of free and impartial justice.

"Justice is never so slender, to us as when we first practise it. It grows in the imagination. It is enlarged by experience. It includes more elements, it touches things with a finer stroke, and it demands more exquisite duties, every single day and year that a man lives, who lives at all right."—*Beecher.*

The policy of Darius.—When Darius, the first of that name, was on his death-bed, his son Artaxerxes inquired of him by what policy he had governed the kingdom for nineteen years, as he wished to follow his example. "My son," said Darius, "be assured that, if my reign has been blessed with greater success and peace than those of my predecessors, it is because, in all things, I have honoured the gods and done justice to every man."[b]

b Percy Anec.

17–23. (17) **footmen,** Heb. runners.[a] Saul's bodyguard. **would not,** *etc.*,[b] deterred not only by the wickedness of the act, but also by its *sacrilege.* This resistance of his authority only exasperated Saul the more. (18) **thou,** a foreigner. **fell upon,**[c] **they made no resistance.** (19) Such indiscriminate

Doeg charged with execution of Ahimelech

a 1 Sa. viii. 11.

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slaughter showed blind infatuation.[d] (20) **Abiathar,**[e] comp. ch. xxiii. 6. (21) **shewed,** told. (22) **knew it,** suspected and feared it. (23) **in safeguard,** so long as Dav. had safety to offer.

A refuge to the oppressed (*v.* 23).—These words may well remind us—I. Of the danger to which our sins have exposed us. II. Of the only place of safety for the guilty and lost. III. Of the deliverance from fear for those who trust in Jesus. IV. Of the assurance of protection which He gives.

Ancient executioners (*v.* 18).—In ancient times, persons of the highest rank and station were employed to execute the sentence of the law. They had not then, as we have at present, public executioners; but the prince laid his commands on any of his courtiers whom he chose, and probably selected the person for whom he had the greatest favour. Gideon commanded Jether, his eldest son, to execute his sentence on the kings of Midian; the king of Israel ordered the footmen who stood around him, and were probably a chosen body of soldiers for the defence of his person, to put to death the priests of the Lord; and when they refused, Doeg, an Edomite, one of his principal officers. Long after the days of Saul, the reigning monarch commanded Beniah, the chief captain of his armies, to perform that duty. Sometimes the chief magistrate executed the sentence of the law with his own hands; for when Jether shrunk from the duty which his father required, Gideon, at that time the supreme magistrate in Israel, did not hesitate to do it himself. In these times such a command would be reckoned equally barbarous and unbecoming; but the ideas which were entertained in those primitive ages of honour and propriety, were in many respects extremely different from ours. In Homer, the exasperated Ulysses commanded his son, Telemachus, to put to death the suitors of Penelope, which was immediately done. The custom of employing persons of high rank to execute the sentence of the law is still retained in the principality of Senaar, where the public executioner is one of the principal nobility; and, by virtue of his office, resides in the royal palace.[f]

b "And thus they were more faithful to Saul, than if they had obeyed his order." — *Wordsworth.*

c "Doeg prob. had a band of assistants under his command, foreigners like himself." — *Spk. Com.*

d "These barbarous atrocities were intended to terrify all the subjects of Saul fr. affording Dav. an asylum." — *Jamieson.*

e 1 Ki. i. 7, 19, 42, ii. 26, 27; Mk. ii. 26.

v. 18. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 245.

"Justice and truth are two points of such exquisite delicacy, that our coarse and blunted instruments will not touch them accurately. If they do find out the point, so as to rest upon it, they bruise and injure it, and lean at least more on the error that surrounds it than on the truth itself."—*Pascal.*

f *Paxton.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

Abiathar escapes from Saul and flies to David

1–6. (1) **Keilah,**[a] city of the Shefalah, or lowland district of Judah; Jos. xv. 44. (2) **inquired,** *etc.*,[b] if Abiathar had not yet joined him (*v.* 6), this was done through prophet Gad. (ch. xxii. 5). (3) It seemed as if they would be hemmed in bet. two foes. (4) **again,** for further assurance. (5) **saved,** *etc.*, obs. their return for his work (*v.* 12). (6) **to Keilah,** some think he came first to Dav. when at this town; others, that he followed Dav.'s fortunes by going with him to it. **ephod,** rescued fr. the ruin at Nob.

Danger in duty (*v.* 3).—We learn—I. That while danger threatens, duty may summon us to greater perils. II. That the greater danger, with God as our helper, involves less of real risk than the lesser danger without Divine aid. III. That we should at all times look less to the peril than to the sources of help and strength. IV. The great danger encountered at God's bidding

a Neh. iii. 17, 18.

b "The murder of the priests had deprived Saul of access to God by Urim and Thummim, and had opened it to David." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 5. *W. Whitaker,* 234; *J. Shepherd,* 102

will find us with the help required. There was the ephod in Keilah.

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7—12. (7) **delivered,** *lit.* hath made him stranger; *i.e.* repudiated or rejected him.[a] (8) **all the people,** fr. adjoining districts, not all the nation. (9) **secretly . . him,** poss. plotted with men of Keilah to give him up, as well as raised the expedition to seize him.[b] (10, 11) The prayer by wh. the oracle was consulted. (12) **deliver.** marg. as Heb. *shut up.*

Inquiring of God.—I. We have here the servant of God in a great strait. In a walled city, surrounded by traitors, ignorant of their designs. II. We have the servant of God inquiring of the Lord concerning the course he should pursue. III. We have David's Master revealing the purpose of men to His servant.

Prayer for protection.—The missionaries to the Fiji Islands were threatened with destruction by the enraged natives, and had no means of defence, except prayer. Their enemies heard them praying, and became fearful, and fled. The reason was given by one of themselves: "They found you were praying to your God, and they know your God is a strong God; and they are gone."

Need of faith in prayer.—Is it not a sad thing that we should think it wonderful for God to hear prayer? Much better faith was that of a little boy in one of the schools in Edinburgh who had attended a prayer-meeting, and at last said to his teacher who conducted it: "Teacher, I wish my sister could be got to read the Bible; she never reads it." "Why, Johnny, should your sister read the Bible?" "Because, if she should once read it, I am sure it would do her good, and she would be converted and be saved." "Do you think so, Johnny." "Yes, I do, sir; and I wish the next time there is a prayer-meeting you would ask the people to pray for my sister, that she may begin to read the Bible." "Well, well, it shall be done, John." So the teacher gave out that a little boy was very anxious that prayer should be offered that his sister might begin to read the Bible. John was observed to get up and go out. The teacher thought it very rude of the boy to disturb the people in a crowded room, and so the next day, when the lad came, he said: "John, I thought it was very rude of you to get up in the prayer-meeting and go out. You ought not to have done so." "Oh, sir," said the boy, "I did not mean to be rude: but I thought I should just like to go home and see my sister reading her Bible for the first time." Thus we ought to believe, and watch with expectation for answers to our prayer. Do not say, "Lord, turn my darkness into light," and then go out with your candle as though you expected to find it dark. After asking the Lord to appear for you, expect Him to do so, for according to your faith so be it unto you.

David at Keilah

[a] Sept. and Vulg. read to *sell, deliver.*

[b] Ps. x. 9, xxxvii. 12, 13.

"Alas! there are times when foreshadowings of evil, vaporous and undefined, rise up over the soul, like the night mists over the meadowland, obscuring not only the landmarks of earth, but dimming even the star-guides of heaven. At such periods we find our only safety in solitude and prayer."—*A. B. Edwards.*

"Fear shows itself by paleness of the cheeks, sinking of the spirits, trembling of the joints, hurry and confusion of the mind and thoughts, agonies of nature and fainting. Many a person has died with fear. Sometimes it rouses all nature to exert itself in speedy flight, or other methods to avoid the approaching evil; sudden terror has performed some almost incredibles of this kind."—*Dr. Watts.*

13—18. (13) **six hundred,** comp. ch. xxii. 2. **went . . go,** scattering themselves for a time. (14) **wilderness,** bet. hill country of Judah and the Dead Sea. **Ziph,** now Tell-Zif, a hill about 4 miles S.E. of Hebron;[a] Jos. xv. 54—62. (15) **a wood,** a thick wood. (16) **strengthened,** *etc.*, encouraged him to trust on. Jon.'s strong confidence would cheer his friend. (17) Either Jon. knew of Dav.'s being anointed, or he saw that Saul was going to ruin. (18) **made,** renewed.

The true in life (*v.* 16).—Two lessons in this chapter:—(1) That the most heroic heart may sometimes be overcome by fear:

David in the wilderness of Ziph

[a] *Robinson vv.* 15, 16. *H. Lindsay,* I. 261.

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill

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together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues."—*Shakespeare.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"We ought to love life; we ought to desire to live here so long as God ordains it; but let us not so encase ourselves in time, that we cannot break the crust, and begin to throw out shoots for the other life."—*Beecher.*

"One of the greatest misfortunes of our life is, that we never sufficiently know our own good till we lose it. We fly from that we should seek; we seek that we should avoid; and never begin to bewail our losses but when they are not to be recovered."—*N. Caussin.*

"A Christian should not discover that he has enemies by any other way than by doing more good to them than to others. 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.'"—*Bp. T. Wilson.*

c Harmer.

the Ziphites make a compact with Saul

(2) That the crimes of a father may alienate the hearts of his children. The text gives us three facts. I. The deep depression of a true soul. Several things tend to depress the true spirit in this world. 1. Seemingly adverse circumstances; 2. Providential discrepancies; 3. Non-success in religious service; 4. Consciousness of moral unworthiness; 5. Physical infirmities. II. The distinguishing power of a true man: to strengthen a brother's heart in God! This he can do by—1. A truthful exposition of God's method of governing the fallen in this world; 2. A practical expression of genuine sympathy; 3. A devout intercession with heaven. III. The highest function of a true friend. It is one thing to have the power to strengthen, and another thing to use it when and where required. He who uses it is the truest friend. Perhaps Jonathan reminded David—1. Of the great providence of God; 2. Of the trials of the good men who had passed away; 3. Of God's past kindness to him as an individual.[b]

An illustration of v. 16 *from Eastern travel.*—A passage in the *Travels* of Pietro della Valle, which bears a strong resemblance to this part of David's history, considerably illustrates it. Speaking of his passing through a forest or wood in Mazanderan, a province of Persia, into which they entered on the 11th of February, and complaining of the moisture and heaviness of the roads there, he tells us, "We did at length master them, but with so much difficulty that we could not get forward above two leagues that day, and night overtook us before we got through the forest. We endeavoured to find some place of retreat in different parts, to which the barking of dogs, or noise made by other animals, seemed to guide us. But at last, finding no inhabited place near us, we passed the night in the same forest, among the trees, under which we made a kind of entrenchment with our baggage, in a place where we found many leaves that had fallen from the trees. These served us for a carpet and for bedding both, without any other tent than the branches of the great trees there, through which the moonshine reached us, and made a kind of pavilion of cloth of silver. There was no want of wood for the making a great fire, any more than of provisions for supper, which we sent for from the nearest village in the forest, seated by the highway-side, where, after some contest with the people, of a savage and suspicious temper, who were ready to come to blows with my messengers, without knowing any reason why they should; they, after coming to a right understanding with us, became very civil, would have lodged us, and made us presents: but on our refusal, on account of the distance of the way, the chief person of the town, with other principal inhabitants, came of their own accord to our camp, laden with good meat, and other provisions, and spent the night with us with great gaiety. They even brought us a country musician, who regaled us during supper, and all night long, with certain forest songs, in the language of the country, that is, of Mazanderan, where a coarse kind of Persian is spoken, sung to the sound of a miserable violin, which was sufficiently tiresome."[c]

19—24. (19) **came . . Saul,**[a] so currying favour. **Hachilah,** S. side of Tell-Zif. **Jeshimon,** the waste, or wilderness. (20) **our part,** as knowing the district. (21) Saul changes fr. desperate passion to maudlin sentiment. (22) **his haunt is,** *lit.* **his**

[a] "Fr. the Tell of

foot shall be; find his habits; etc. **subtilly,** Ge. ii. 1. (24) **Maon,**[b] Jos. xv. 55; bet. Hebron and Engedi.

The points of the compass (*v.* 19).—The margin has for south, "on the right hand." "The Hebrews express the east, west, north, and south, by words which signify before, behind, left, and right, according to the situation of a man with his face turned towards the south." In the same way do the Hindoos speak on this subject; the north is shown by the left, the south by the right hand, the face being considered to be towards the east. When the situation of anything is spoken of, it is always mentioned in connection with the cardinal points. Often, when people wish to give intelligence respecting anything, they begin by asking a question which conveys the information required. Thus the situation of poor David was described by asking a question. "Have not the elephants been ravaging the fields of Tamban last night?" is a question asked when such a circumstance has taken place.[c]

25—29. (25) **into a rock,** or to the cliff. (26) **mountain,** not single hill, but range of rocky cliffs. (27) **invaded,** made a raid to carry off booty of corn or cattle. (28) **Sela-hammah-lekoth,**[a] the rock of slipping away, or escaping. Some think meaning is to *divide*,[b] bec. Saul was divided bet. two enemies. (29) **Engedi,**[c] *fountain of the kid.* Anciently called *Hazezon-Tamar* (Ge. xiv. 7), the felling of palm trees; now *Ain-Jidy*, 200 yards W. of Dead Sea.

Engedi (*v.* 29).—The village of Engedi, situated in the neighbourhood of Jericho, derives its name from the Hebrew word *Ain*, a fountain, and a kid. It is suggested by the situation among lofty rocks, which, overhanging the valleys, seem to threaten the traveller with immediate destruction. A fountain of pure water rises near the summit, which the inhabitants call Engedi, the fountain of the goat, because it is hardly accessible to any other creature.[d]

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Ziph a panorama of the whole surrounding district is to be seen. So the Ziphites could easily tell Dav.'s lurking places." — *Jamieson*, fr. *Van de Velde.*

b "The name still exists in *Main*, a lofty hill seven miles S. of Hebron." — *Dict. Bib.*

c Roberts.

David finds refuge at Engedi

a "Fr. *chalak*, to be smooth, and in one form of the verb, to slip away, to escape" —*Gesenius.*

b LXX., Vulg., Syr., Arabic.

c "On all sides the country is full of caverns, wh. serve as lurking-places for outlaws at the present day." —*Robinson.*

d Paxton.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1061.

1—4. (1) **following,** Heb. *after.* (2) **rocks . . goats,** "the high rocks and precipices, in wh. these animals delight." (3) **sheepcotes,**[a] caves used for shelter of flocks fr. the heat. **cover his feet,** Ju. iii. 24. **sides,** the deeper recesses; they would be hidden by the darkness, but would clearly see any one entering.[b] (4) **skirt,** lit. *the wing*, either he approached softly fr. behind, or took advantage of Saul's sleeping.[c]

David's forbearance towards Saul (*vv.* 4—6).—Consider David in a threefold relation. I. As a subject towards his prince. II. As a saint towards his oppressor. III. As a believer towards his God.[d]

The caves of Palestine (*v.* 3).—This was, no doubt, such a cave as shepherds were accustomed to resort to. Such caves are numerous, and some of them very extensive, in Palestine, Arabia Petræa, and other mountainous parts of Western Asia. The cave of Adullam, in which David remained with four hundred men beside his family, and this of Engedi, in the sides or further parts of which six hundred men stood, without being observed by Saul when also in the cave, must have been large, but by no

Saul and David in the cave of Engedi

a "Among wandering tribes, grots and caverns are usually preferred for sheepcotes, bec. they offer both shelter and security." —*De Saulc*

b See Ps. lvii.

c "Saul had composed himself to the usual short rest during the afternoon heat." —*Kitto.*

d C. Simeon, M.A. "The Heb. indic. that Saul entered the cave for the

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relief of nature; in such cases the robe would lie spread out on the ground, or be laid aside: in either case within Dav.'s reach." —See *Josephus*, and *Stanley*. For Engedi see *Preacher's Lantern*, iii. 605; *Villages of the Bible*, by *Parton Hood*; also *Thomson, Land and Book*, 602 *ff.*; *Porter, Hd. Bk. for Syria*, 231.

e *Kitto.*

David reveals himself to Saul

a 1 Sa. x. 1.

v. 5. *J. Shepherd*, 102.

vv. 5, 6. *Ser.* by *W. Reading* (1714), another by *J. Paradise* (1661).

vv. 5—8. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 153.

b *J. Hales.*

v. 7. David stayed his servants, or, literally, it reads, he "divided" or "cut them off." The word denotes both the eagerness and violence of David's men in attempting to carry out their design, and his resoluteness in opposing them, as it were, by force.

c *Morier.*

David proves that he has spared Saul

a 2 Ki. v. 13.

v. 13. *A Ser.* by *L. Milbourne* (1711).

"Calumny would soon starve and die of itself, if nobody took it in and gave it lodging."—*Leighton.*

means remarkably large, as the ancient writers, as well as modern travellers, give us accounts of caves fully extensive enough for this purpose, and some that would have contained a much greater number of men. Some of them consist, not of one compartment, but of two or more; that is, the exterior entrance leads to a sort of antechamber, within which there is another or several others, which, collectively or separately, are much larger than the first. Perhaps the cave of Engedi was such as this: and the description that David and his men "remained in the sides of the cave," appears to sanction this conclusion. Some of the caves are, however, single, and being very large, with a narrow entrance, are so dark in the remoter parts, that persons near the entrance cannot by any possibility perceive others who remain in the interior, while their own operations can, of course, be most distinctly observed by the latter. This, perhaps, was the relative position of David's party and the king.[c]

5—8. (5) **smote him,** what he had done was an insult. (6) **my master,** refusing to admit any rebellion against him. **Lord's anointed,**[a] therefore all respect was due to him. (7) **stayed,** checked, lit. *cut off* the purpose. (8) **stooped . . earth,** in attitude of worship.

David's heart smote him (*v.* 5).—In these words consider—I. The person: David. His greatness: he was a king in expectation, and already anointed. II. His solicitousness, his care and jealousy: his heart smote him. As the person is great, so is the care and remorse conceived upon the consideration of his action exceeding great. III. The cause of his remorse.[b]

Bowing to the earth (*v.* 8).—"Some time after this, the ambassador had his public audience, when he saw the king in great splendour; he was decked in all his jewels, with his crown on his head, his bazubends or armlets on his arms, seated on his throne. We approached him, bowing after our own manner; but the Persians bowed as David did to Saul, who 'stooped with his face to the earth and bowed himself.' That is, not touching the earth with the face, but bowing with their bodies at right angles, the hands placed on the knees, and the legs somewhat asunder. It is only on remarkable occasions that the prostration of the Rouce Zemeen, the face of the earth, is made, which must be the falling upon the face to the earth, and worshipping, as Joshua did.[c]

9—15. (9) **men's words,** flatterers at court, who were Dav.'s slanderers. (10) **some . . thee,** the Heb. is more correctly rendered by *Vulg.*, "*I thought to kill thee.*" (11) **my father,**[a] term indicating his obedience and respect. **evil,** *etc.*, that evil of *rebelliousness* wh. Saul persisted in recognising. **my soul,** or *life*. (12) **avenge,** Ro. xii. 19. (13) Dav. affirms his integrity. (14) And pleads his insignificance. He neither deserved, nor was worth the trouble of such enmity as Saul's. (15) **the Lord,** *etc.*, Ps. xxxv. i.

Expressions of respect (*v.* 12).—The attitudes and expression of respect, which the rules of good-breeding require from the Oriental, are far more diversified and servile than ours; yet he uses a freedom with his equals, and even with persons of superior condition, which we are uniformly taught to regard as improper,

It is reckoned among us a sure mark of vulgarity, in any person to mention his own name before that of his equal; and an instance of great arrogance to name himself before his superior; but in the East it is quite customary for the speaker to name himself first. This was also the habitual practice in Israel, and quite consistent with their notions of good-breeding: for David, who had been long at the court of Saul, and could be no stranger to the rules of good manners, addressed his sovereign in these words: "The Lord judge between me and thee;" and this at a time too when he treated that prince with great reverence; for "he stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself," immediately before. In the same manner, Ephron the Hittite replied to the patriarch Abraham, who was at least his equal, more probably his superior: "My lord, hearken unto me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that between me and thee?" Hence David was guilty of no rudeness to Saul in naming himself first; his conduct was quite agreeable to the modern ceremonial of Eastern courts, at least to that of Persia, which seems to have been established soon after the flood.[b]—*Terms of reproach* (*v.* 14).—It is highly contemptible and provoking to compare a man to a dead dog. Has a servant offended his master, he will say, "Stand there, and be like a dead dog to me." Does a creditor press much for his money, the debtor will say, "Bring your bond, and then be as a dead dog to me." "I care as much for that fellow as for a dead dog." "I will tell you what that fellow is worth: a dead dog!"[c]

16—22. (16) **wept,** in compunction. He really loved David, and was for a time melted by the sparing of his life in the cave. (17) **more righteous,** right-minded. (18) **well,** mercifully. (19) **find his enemy,** get him at advantage, as you have done. (20) Saul lets out the secret conviction wh. impelled him to try and kill Dav. (21) **seed after me,**[a] Saul's trouble was that he might not found a dynasty. (22) **into the hold,** fearing Saul's better feeling would prove but temporary.

The reconciliation of Saul (*v.* 16).—I. While the good man sees his own perils, let him also see the restraints which are put upon the wicked. II. Let the bad man put to himself some serious questions respecting the restraints which limit his power. III. Though mediation may fail in carrying out its purposes, yet let no wise mediator suppose that his work is in vain. IV. Observe the infinite superiority of power that is moral, as compared with power that is physical. 1. In the worst men there is something that may be touched; 2. In every life there is at least one opportunity of showing the real quality of the heart.[b]

Kicherer and the assassin (*vv.* 17—19).—This name will remind the reader of the first missionary to the African Hottentots. During his early residence among them, he was visited by a man who had been sentenced at the Cape of Good Hope to death, but had effected his escape; and who, making great pretensions to religion, imposed on Mr. K. and induced him to receive him into his house. He slept in a room immediately adjoining that of the missionary, and rose during the night with the design of murdering him, and of making his escape, with the property on the premises, to a distant place. At the moment he was proceeding to the bedside of this good man, Mr. K. was suddenly awoke in a fit of terror, and unconsciously cried out as though

B.C. *cir.* 1061.

v. 12. In appealing to God to avenge him upon Saul, we must not understand David to pray to God to punish the king for the injuries he had done him, but only to deliver and vindicate him, in which sense the word is used in old English, as in the parable of the unjust judge.

Broken friendship may be soldered, but never made sound. A reconciled friend is a double foe.—*Spanish.*

b Paxton.

c Roberts.

Saul and David are reconciled

a 1 Sa. xx. 15

v. 16. *D. Lamont,* iii. 417.

vv. 17, 18. *H. Lindsay,* i. 275.

'When a man in great sorrow is spoken of, it is said, 'Ah, how he did lift up his voice and weep!' 'Alas, how great is their trouble, they are all lifting up the voice.'"—*Roberts.*

b Dr. Parker.

"Kneel not to me: the power that I have on you is to spare you; the malice towards you, to forgive you; live, and deal with others better."—*Shakespeare.*

aware of the design of this wicked man, who, in consequence, became alarmed, and fled.

B.C. *cir.* 1060.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

the death of Samuel

1—3. (1) **Samuel died,** closing a noble and useful life of steadfast integrity. **in his house,** within its precincts.[a] **wilderness of Paran,**[b] name prob. applied to the district S. of Judah, beyond its limits. (2) **Maon,** ch. xxiii. 25. **Carmel,** 1 Sa. xv. 12. (3) **Nabal,** *foolish, churlish.* **Abigail,** *father's joy.* **house of Caleb,** a Calebite.[c]

Sunset on Ramah (*v.* 1).—Here we have a mighty nation congregated around the bier of Samuel at Ramah. Let us inquire what it was that made his name so revered—what the secret of his greatness in life, and of the universal lamentation at his death and burial. Notice—I. His kindness of heart: this was accompanied with the kindred virtues of generosity, unselfishness, and delicate consideration for the feelings of others. II. His firmness. III. His integrity: he was a true patriot. IV. His piety: he was emphatically a man of prayer.[d]

Marlborough and his servant (*v.* 3).—The Duke of Marlborough possessed great command of temper, and never permitted it to be ruffled by little things, in which even the greatest men have been occasionally found unguarded. As he was one day riding with Commissary Marriot, it began to rain, and he called to his servant for his cloak. The servant not bringing it immediately, he called for it again. The servant being embarrassed with the straps and buckles, did not come up to him. At last, it raining very hard, the duke called to him again, and asked him what he was about, that he did not bring his cloak. "You may stay, sir," grumbled the fellow, "if it rains cats and dogs, till I can get at it." The duke turned round to Marriot, and said, very coolly, "Now I would not be of that fellow's temper for all the world."

a "In the East still every respectable family has its own house of the dead: often this is in a little detached garden, consisting of a small stone building, where there is no rock, resembling a house, which is called the sepulchre of the family—it has neither door nor window."—*Jamieson.*

b Nu. x. 12.

c *Kukinos,* curlike; LXX.; *Josephus.*

d *Dr. Macduff.*

David seeks hospitality of Nabal

4—9. (4) **shear his sheep,** usually time of free-handed hospitality.[a] (5) **greet him,** salute him. Heb. *ask him in my name of peace.* (6) **that liveth,** or about his life: they were to go politely and kindly. (7) **hurt them not,** a wandering tribe like Dav.'s might have used the strong hand, and *taken* what they wanted. (8) **good day,** a feasting joyous day. (9) **ceased,** rested: perhaps bec. no ans. was given at once: they waited for it.

Sheep-shearing (*v.* 4).—Sheep-shearing is an operation to which allusion is frequently made in the sacred volume. The wool in very remote times was not shorn with an iron instrument, but plucked off with the hand. From the concurrent testimony of several writers, the time when it is performed in Palestine, falls in the month of March. If this be admitted, it fixes the time of the year when Jacob departed from Laban on his return to his father's house, for he left him at the time he went to shear his sheep. In like manner, the sheep of Nabal were shorn in the spring; for among the presents which Abigail made to David, five measures of parched corn are mentioned. But we know from other passages of Scripture, that they were accustomed to use parched corn when it was full-grown, but not ripe; for the people of Israel were commanded in the law

a "Now, on such a festive occasion as a sheep-shearing, near a town or village, an Arab sheik of the neighbouring desert would hardly fail to put in a word, either in person or by letter, and his message would be a transcript of that of David."—*Robinson.*

"Since the inhabitants of these southern regions received little or no protection in person or property from

not to eat parched corn or green ears, until the selfsame day they had made an offering to the Lord. This time seems to have been spent by the Eastern swains in more than usual hilarity. And it may be inferred from several hints in the Scriptures, that the wealthier proprietors invited their friends and dependents to sumptuous entertainments. Nabal, on that joyous occasion which the servants of David called a good or festive day, although a churlish and niggardly man, "held a feast in his house like the feast of a king;" and on a similar occasion Absalom treated his friends and relations in the same magnificent style. The modern Arabs are more frugal and parsimonious; yet their hearts, so little accustomed to expand with joyous feelings, acknowledge the powerful influence of increasing wealth, and dispose them to indulge in greater jollity than usual. On these occasions they perhaps kill a lamb, or a goat, and treat their relations and friends; and at once to testify their respect for their guests, and add to the luxury of the feast, crown the festive board with new cheese and milk, dates and honey.[b]

B.C. *cir.* 1060.

Saul, they would have been constantly exposed to the rapacity of the tribes of the desert, had not Dav. and his flying troop protected them. It was not therefore unreasonable of Dav. to ask a share of the feast for his people."—*Ewald.*

v. 6. *H. Grose, Posth. Wks.* 353.

b Paxton.

10—13. (10) **servants . . master,**[a] implying that Dav. was a runaway slave. (11) **bread, water,** here used for meat and drink. **know not whence,** Nab. had so much right on his side, that Dav. was not one of the known Arab chiefs. (12) **went,** away, back again. (13) **gird,** *etc.*, the insolent ans. roused Dav.; he did not explain his intention, but it was very manifest. **stuff,**[b] baggage of the people, *impedimenta.*

The message of the Church to men of wealth (*vv.* 10, 11).—Wherever classes are held apart by rivalry and selfishness instead of drawn together by the law of love—wherever there has not been established a kingdom of heaven, but only a kingdom of the world—there exist the forces of inevitable collision. I. The causes of this false social state. 1. False basis on which social superiority was held to rest; 2. A false conception respecting rights; 3. Circumstances. II. The message of the Church to the man of wealth. 1. The spiritual dignity of man as man; 2. The law of sacrifice; 3. Rightful influence.[c]

The influence of civility.—When Zachariah Fox, the great merchant of Liverpool, was asked by what means he contrived to realise so large a fortune as he possessed, his reply was, "Friend, by one article alone, in which thou mayest deal too, if thou pleasest—civility."—*True civility.*—One of the early governors of Virginia was conversing with a merchant in the street, when a negro slave saluted him. He politely returned the salutation, when the merchant asked, "How! does your excellency condescend to bow to a slave?" "To be sure!" answered the governor: "I should be very sorry that a slave should show himself more civil than I."

Nabal's churlish answer

a "In accordance with his character he turns away the deputation, and adds some insulting expressions about Dav., the low-born traitor who rebelled against his rightful lord."—*Ewald.*

b 1 Sa. xxx. 24.

vv. 10, 11. *Dr. R. Lucas,* i. 221.

c F. W. Robertson.

"Courtesy, which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds, with smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls, and courts of princes, where it first was named."—*Milton.*

14—17. (14) **railed on,**[a] Heb. *flew upon.* (15) **conversant with,** while the flocks were pasturing in their neighbourhood. (16) **a wall,** admitting their good services. (17) **evil is determined,** the man knew the custom of these tribes.[b] **son of Belial,** De. xiii. 13. **speak to him,** therefore he came to Abigail.

An Eastern illustration of v. 16.—This was said of David and his men, who had been kind unto the servants of Nabal, and had probably been a defence to them while they had been in the

Abigail informed

David's anger

a From Fr. *railler,* to swagger, bluster, scold.

b "When such tribute is denied to the Arab chiefs, they are wont to *enforce* it

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as a right."—Jamieson.

c Roberts.

Abigail takes provisions to David

a "These of various sizes, the smaller of skin of kid, larger of he-goat, still larger of ox skin. The Arabs invariably carry their milk, water, etc., in such leathern vessels. The provisions were ready to Abigail's hand, as prepared for the feast."—*Spk.Com.*

b Comp. Ge. xxxii. 3—21.

c "A deep dip into the hill, into which she came down fr. the N., wh n Dav. came down to it fr. S." —*Wordsworth.*

d Ps. cix. 5; Pr. xvii. 13.

Abigail meets David

a "The main argument rests on the description of her husband's charac., wh. she draws with that union of playfulness and seriousness wh., above all things, turns away wrath."—*Stanley.*

v. 25. *S. Gough,* 197.

"Sincerity is an openness of heart: 'tis found in a very few people; and that which we see commonly is not it, but a subtle dissimulation, to gain the confidence of others."—*Charron.*

b Paxton.

she appeaseth the anger of David

wilderness tending their sheep. And the same figure is also used among us, in reference to those who have been a defence to others. "Ah! my friend; you have been a *mathil, i.e.* a wall, unto me," "Alas! my wall is fallen." means the friend is dead, or become weak. "What care I for that jackal? I have a good wall before me."[c]

18—22. (18) **bottles,** skins of goats.[a] (19) **before me,** to appease Dav. with the present.[b] (20) **covert of the hill,** lit. *secret place:* prob. defile or glen.[c] (21) **had said,** to some of his leading men. **in vain,**[d] to no profit; only to meet with refusal and insult, lit. *for a falsehood,* or false expectation. (22) A rash oath. For form comp. Ru. i. 17.

The control of anger.—Socrates, finding himself in great emotion against a slave, said, "I would beat you if I were not angry." Having received a box on the ear, he contented himself by only saying, with a smile, "It is a pity we do not know when to put on a helmet." Socrates meeting a gentleman of rank in the streets, saluted him; but the gentleman took no notice of it. His friends in company, observing what passed, told the philosopher "they were so exasperated at the man's incivility that they had a good mind to resent it." But he very calmly made answer: "If you meet any person in the road in a worse habit of body than yourself, would you think you had reason to be enraged at him on that account? Pray, then, what greater reason can you have for being incensed at a man for a worse habit of mind than any of yourselves?"

23—26. (23) **lighted off,** dismounting in presence of a superior in token of respect. By her action, as well as words, seeking to make amends for her husband's insult. (24) **fell at his feet,** coming near, in earnestness of her supplication. (25) **regard,** pay heed to; lay to his heart the foolish answer. **folly,**[a] silliness, he is a weak creature. (26) Dav. was acting on self-will, and may well be reminded to ask himself if God was with him in this expedition.

Oriental tokens of respect (*v.* 23).—A rider was expected to dismount when he met a person of more elevated rank. Under the influence of this ancient custom, the Egyptians dismount from their asses when they approach the tombs of their departed saints; and both Christians and Jews are obliged to submit to the same ceremony. Christians in that country must also dismount when they happen to meet with officers of the army. In Palestine, the Jews, who are not permitted to ride on horseback, are compelled to dismount from their asses and pass by a Mohammedan on foot. This explains the reason that Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal, alighted from their asses; it was a mark of respect which the former owed to her father, and the latter to David, a person of high rank and growing renown. It was undoubtedly for the same reason that Rebecca alighted from the camel on which she rode, when the servant informed her that the stranger whom she descried at a distance, in the field, was his master; and that Naaman, the Syrian grandee, alighted from his chariot, at the approach of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha.[b]

27—31. (27) **blessing,** present. (28) **forgive the trespass,** *v.* 24; taking on herself the wrong of at first refusing

Dav.'s request. **certainly . . house,** therefore he need not avenge himself, and therefore should not stain his hands with blood. (29) Such sympathy was sure to touch Dav.'s heart. **bundle,** bag, in wh. precious things put, it was then *tied up.*[a] **sling out,** delicate allusion to feat with Goliath.[b] (30, 31) **no grief,** *lit.* staggering, or stumbling. She is sure he will, by-and-by, be glad if he broke his rash vow, *vv.* 21, 22.

The bundle of life (*v.* 29).—Anything which is important or valuable is called a *kattu, i.e.* "a bundle, a pack, a bale." A young man, who is enamoured of a female, is said to be "bound up in the *kattu*, bundle, of love." Of a just judge, the people say, "He is bound up in the bundle of justice." When a man is very strict in reference to his caste, "he is bound up in the bundle of high caste." When a person is spoken to respecting the vanities or impurities of his system, he often replies, "Talk not to me, I am bound up in the bundle of my religion." "Why do those people act so? Because they are bound up in the bundle of desire." David, therefore, was to be bound up in the bundle of life—nothing was to harm him.[c]

32—35. (32) **which sent thee,** admitting that *God* was restraining his hand. (33) **advice,** *taste,* wisdom, or discernment. (34) Only such persuasion could have turned him fr. his intention. (35) **received,** this reception was the seal of peace bet. them. Easterns will not injure those fr. whom they consent to receive food.

David kept from avenging himself on Nabal (*vv.* 32, 33).—See —1. What evils men would commit if left to themselves. We are amazed at David's cruel resentment. It shows, however, what corruption there is in the human heart. II. How much we owe to God for His providential restraints. Learn—(1) What a dreadful evil is revenge; (2) What a blessing is a faithful monitor; (3) What need all have to pray against temptation.[a]

An Eastern illustration of v. 35.—Does a person ask a favour of his superior; it will not be, in general, said in reply, "I grant your request;" or, "You shall have your desire:" but, *Nan un muggatti partiain,* "I have seen thy face." Has a man greatly offended another, and does he plead for mercy; the person to whom offence has been given will say, "I have seen thy face," which means that he is pardoned. Should a friend inquire, "Well, what punishment do you intend to inflict on that fellow?" he will reply, "I have seen his face." In applying for help, should there be a denial, the applicant will ask, "In whose face shall I now look?" When a man has nearly lost all hope, he says, "For the sake of the face of God, grant me my request."[b]

36—40. (36) **like . . king,** for abundance and liberality. **drunken,** no doubt of intoxic. charac. of this wine. (37) **gone out of,** and he would feel very weak and exhausted. **died within him,**[a] became stiff and senseless, and never recovered. (38) His death came to be regarded as Div. judgment. (39) **communed with,** negotiating a marriage. E. customs permitted a king to do so at once.[b] (40) **Carmel,** as *v.* 2.

Death from fright (*vv.* 37, 38).—About fifty years ago the bridge over the Usk, near Caerleon, Monmouthshire, was washed away, and a new one had to be constructed. Whilst the buttresses were being built, a commercial traveller, who had been absent some time from the place, drove up one night in his gig to the

B.C. *cir* 1060.

a Ge. xlii. 35.

b 1 Sa. xvii. 40; Jer. x. 18.

v. 29. *Bp. Smith,* 253.

"The sun should not set upon our anger, neither should he rise upon our confidence. We should freely forgive, but forget rarely. I will not be revenged, and this I owe to my enemy; but I will remember, and this I owe to myself."—*Colton.*

c Roberts.

David's reply to Abigail

v. 32. *H. Hughes, Fem. Chr.* ii. 150.

vv. 32, 33. *Dr. South,* ii. 355; *Dr. V. Knox,* vi. 192.

a C. Simeon, M.A.

"Anger and the thirst of revenge are a kind of fever; fighting and lawsuits, bleeding,—at least, an evacuation. The latter occasions a dissipation of money; the former, of those fiery spirits which cause a preternatural fermentation."—*Shenstone.*

b Roberts.

Nabal's sudden death

a "The affair, now doubly vexatious to him, drives him into such a brutal rage that he falls into a fit on the spot, and dies 10 days after fr. a stroke of apoplexy."—*Ewald.*

B.C. *cir.* 1060.

b "After the customary mourning of 7 days, she would prob. feel herself at liberty."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 34. *W. Richardson.* ii. 220.

"The thing in the world I am most afraid of is fear, and with good reason, that passion alone in the trouble of it exceeding all other accidents."—*Montaigne.*

"I feel my sinews slackened with the fright, and a cold sweat trills down all o'er my limbs, as if I were dissolving into water."—*Dryden.*

Abigail becomes the wife of David

a Not the Jezreel in Issachar.

b 2 Sa. iii. 14, 15.

c Is. x. 30.

"Sincerity is to speak as we think, to do as we pretend and profess, to perform and make good what we promise, and really to be what we would seem and appear to be. It creates confidence in those we have to deal with, and saves the labour of many inquiries."—*Tillotson.*

d Harmer.

"The man who bears an honourable mind, will scorn to treat a woman lawlessly."—*Shakespeare*

e Justus Moser.

river side, where the bridge used to be. It was a very dark night, and he gave the reins to his horse, who, he knew, was well accustomed to the road. They crossed safely over what he took to be the bridge, and came to an inn near the river. The landlady asked him, being an old acquaintance, what part of the country he had come in from. "From Newport," he answered. "Then you must have crossed the river?" said the woman, in astonishment. "Yes, of course. How else could I have come?" "But how did you manage it, and in the dark too?" "The same as usual: there is no difficulty in driving over the bridge, even though it be dark." "Bless the man!" said the landlady, "there is no bridge to drive over. You must have come along the planks left by the men." "Impossible," was the answer; and nothing could persuade the traveller that night that there was no bridge. But early in the morning he went to the river side, and found, as he was told, that the bridge was gone. His horse had taken him safely over three planks, left by the workmen, where one false step, to the right or to the left, would instantly have plunged him into the swollen river beneath. So terrified was he at the dreadful danger he had gone through, and so marvellously escaped, that the unhappy man went back to his inn, took to his bed, and actually died within the week of the effects of the impression the discovery made on him.

41—44. (41) **be a servant,** with E. extravagance of fig., expressing her sense of the honour done her in the request. (42) **five damsels,** being rich, she had these for waiting-maids; Ge. xxiv. 61. (43) **took,** had taken. **Jezreel,**[a] a town of Judah, near Carmel, Jos. xv. 56. (44) **Phalti,** or Phaltiel.[b] **Gallim,** bet. Gibeah and Jerusalem.[c]

Washing the feet (*v.* 41).—The necessity for washing the feet in the East has been attributed to their wearing sandals; but it is very requisite, according to Sir John Chardin, let the covering of the feet be of what kind it will. "Those that travel in the hot countries of the East," he tells us, "such as Arabia is, begin, at their arriving at the end of their journey, with pulling off the coverings of their feet. The sweat and the dust which penetrate all sorts of coverings for the feet produce a filth there, which excites a very troublesome itching. And though the Eastern people are extremely careful to preserve the body neat, it is more for refreshment than cleanliness that they wash their feet at the close of their journey. According to D'Arvieux, the little yellow morocco boots, worn by the Arabs, which are made very light, so as that they may walk in them afoot, and even run in them, are yet so tight as not to be penetrated by water; but none of the Eastern coverings for the foot, it seems, can guard against the dust; consequently this custom of washing the feet is not merely ascribed to their use of sandals; a circumstance that has not, I think, been attended to, and which, therefore, claims our notice."[d]

—A cheerful wife.—The tear of a loving girl, says an old book, is like a dewdrop on the rose; but that on the cheek of a wife is a drop of poison to her husband. Try to appear cheerful and contented, and your husband will be so; and, when you have made him happy, you will become so, not in appearance, but in reality. The skill required is not so great. Nothing flatters a man so much as the happiness of his wife: he is always proud of himself as the source of it.[e]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1060.

the Ziphites tell Saul where David is

1—4. (1) **Ziphites**, ch. xxiii. 19.[a] (2) **down**, from Gibeah. (3) **by the way**, comp. ch. xxiv. 3. (4) **spies**, this necess. to secure information of Saul's movements.

Arab encampments.—I noticed at all the encampments which we passed that the sheik's was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that, when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or sleeps is thus designated. So Saul, when he lay sleeping, had his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster, and Abner and the people lay round about him. The whole of that scene is extremely Oriental and perfectly natural, even to the deep sleep into which all had fallen, so that David and Abishai could walk among them in safety. The Arabs sleep heavily, especially when fatigued. Often, when travelling, my muleteers and servants have resolved to watch by turns in places thought to be dangerous; but in every instance I soon found them fast asleep, and generally were their slumbers so profound, that I could not only walk among them without their waking, but might have taken the very *'aba* with which they were covered. Then the cruse of water at Saul's head is in exact accordance with the customs of the people at this day. No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place one at the "bolster," so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening, and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst, and the quantity which they drink is enormous. The cruse is, therefore, in perpetual demand. Saul and his party lay in a shady valley, steeped in heavy sleep, after the fatigue of a hot day. The camp ground of Sheik Fareij in Wady Sheikaiyif is adapted, in all respects, to be the scene of the adventure. . . . There are numbers of ravines where the whole could be enacted, every word be heard, and yet the speaker be quite beyond the reach of his enemies.[b]

a "Prob. this is another account of the circum. narrated chapter xxiii. This view is taken in *Syk. Com.* The view that distinct incidents are dealt with is taken by *Keil, Wordsworth,* etc.

See *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* iv. 427.

5—8. (5) **Abner**, ch. xiv. 50. **trench**, wagons. Camp was formed in a circle, the baggage and animals on the outside, the chief's tent in centre. (6) **Hittite**,[a] indic. that some of the Canaanites had joined Dav. **Abishai**,[b] the brother of Joab. (7) **by night**, comp. Gideon's adventure.[c] **spear**, *etc.*, this the sign of royalty. (8) **the second time**, it shall be instant and painless death. Comp. request of Dav.'s men at *Engedi.*[d]

The spear and the bolster (*v.* 7).—Saul, as a king, and as sleeping apparently in the open air, may have had a bolster; but the present text does not say that he had; and we think it more than doubtful that bolsters had yet come into use for other than sick persons and women. Such things were probably, at this period of simple manners, considered marks of effeminacy, to be avoided by men who wish to maintain a character for hardihood. Sir Walter Scott, in note 16 to the second canto of the *Lady of the Lake*, has an anecdote that will illustrate this view: "Hardihood was in

David was a second time betrayed by the Ziphites, for it is clear that this is not a repetition of the narrative in chap. xxiii. The 3,000 men appear to have formed a permanent body of soldiers raised by Saul for the purpose of carrying on his smaller wars.

b *Dr. Thomson.*

David visits Saul's camp

a Comp. 2 Sa. xi. 3.

b 2 Sa. xxiii. 18

c Ju. vii. 9—11.

d 1 Sa. xxiv. 4.

vv. 8, 9. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 24.

v. 5. Saul lay "in the midst of the carriages," or baggage, as it reads literally; the LXX. translate it, "in his

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chariot." Others think that a sort of entrenchment had been thrown up. *Dr. Boothroyd* renders this passage, "Saul lay among the baggage, and the people were encamped round about him."

e Kitto.

David spares Saul the second time

a "No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place one at the bolster, so that the owner can reach it during the night."—*Thomson.*

b Dr. T. Birney.

v. 9. *A Ser.* by *Dr. M. Griffith* (1665); by *Dr. W. Payne* (1633); by *Bp. Smallbrook* (1728).

c Roberts.

David taunts Abner

a "Dav.'s bantering tone in regard to Abner (coupled with *v.* 19) makes it prob. that Dav. attributed Saul's persecution of him in some degree to Abner, who would be likely to dread a rival in the young conqueror of Judah."—*Spk. Com.*

David evidently had now less trust in Saul. Before he followed the king without hesitation into the every respect so essential to the character of a Highlander, that the reproach of effeminacy was the most bitter that could be thrown upon them. Yet it was sometimes hazarded on what we may presume to think slight grounds. It is reported of Sir Ewen Cameron, of Lochiel, when upwards of seventy, that he was surprised by night on a hunting or military expedition. He wrapped himself in his plaid, and lay contentedly down on the snow. Among his attendants, who were preparing to take their rest in the same manner, he observed that one of his grandsons, for his better accommodation, had rolled a large snowball and placed it under his head. The wrath of the ancient chief was awakened by a symptom of what he considered to be degenerate luxury. 'Out upon thee!' said he, kicking the frozen bolster from the head which it supported; 'art thou so effeminate as to need a pillow?'"*c*

9—12. (9) **stretch . . guiltless,** it would be wrong as wilful forcing of God, as murder, and as sacrilege. (10) **the Lord shall smite,** I will leave it all to God. **descend,** *etc.*, as happened ch. xxxi. 3—6. (11) **cruse of water,***a* so as to refresh, if necess., in the night. (12) **sleep fr. the Lord,** expression showing that a special Div. protection was recognised.

David's forbearance (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. We have here an example of searching temptation. II. As the temptation was great, the victory was proportionably illustrious. It was a great victory, inasmuch as it was gained alone. III. Instead of claiming the victory as his own, he piously traces it to its right source, and makes a grateful acknowledgment of the Divine kindness.*b*

Sleep (*v.* 11).—Thus did Saul sleep, with his head on the bolster and a vessel of water by his side; and in this way do all Eastern travellers sleep at this day. The bolster is round, and about eight inches in diameter and twenty in length. In travelling, it is carried rolled up in the mat on which the owner sleeps. In a hot climate a draught of water is very refreshing in the night; hence a vessel filled with water is always kept near where the person sleeps.*c*

13—16. (13) **other side,** of the ravine. **great space,** securing Dav.'s safety; yet not out of hearing in the clear air. (14) **people,** *etc.*, not this time does he make direct appeal to Saul. (15) Such taunting is characteristic of the East;*a* comp. ch. xvii. 43, 44. (16) **see where,** plainly proving in what imminent peril Saul had been placed.

The cruse of water (*v.* 16).—Some children were looking at Bible pictures, when they came to one of Saul, the king of Israel, who, according to the Scripture narrative, is represented as lying "sleeping within the trench," or (as rendered in the margin of our Bibles) "in the midst of his carriages," "his spear stuck in the ground, and a cruse of water at his bolster." While one child read the account from the Scriptures, the others examined minutely the different portions of the picture, when they quickly discovered that the artist had made a great mistake. "Here," said one, "is Saul asleep, with Abner and the people round him." "And here," said another, "is the spear stuck in the ground at his bolster." "Now, where is the cruse of water? It is not there." "Yes, it is," said another, "but the painter has put it at Saul's feet, and not at his head, where it should have

been!" "That is not a good picture," they all exclaimed: "the Bible must be true; and the Bible says the cruse of water was at Saul's bolster." True to the life indeed is every word of the book of truth, and nothing can possibly be taken from it or added to it without marring its truthfulness, beauty, and simplicity. Pass an Eastern encampment at the present day, and what do you see? The persons of distinction sleeping inside a circle of their friends and dependents, the bullocks and beasts of burden forming a larger circle outside them, and again an outside circle, formed by the carts, or bandies as they are called. It is, however, with regard to the cruse of water at the head that this subject has been chiefly selected. As you pass the sleeping forms, whether in their encampments in the wide plains, or in the open verandahs of the village streets, the cruse of water is invariably to be met with at the head of the sleepers, who, in that dry and thirsty land, frequently awake to take a long and refreshing draught.

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17—20. (17) Ch. xxiv. 16. (18) **what evil,** Saul knew he was not punishing rebellion, but trying to put a rival out of the way. (19) **Lord have stirred,** "let me know my offence, and I am ready to make an offering for it to the Lord."[a] **offering,** *minchah,* gift. Le. ii. 1. **abiding,** continuing, cleaving. Virtually banishing him fr. Jehovah.[b] (20) **before .. Lord,** very plainly intimating that God would avenge his death. **partridge,** lit. *the caller,* fr. its well-known call or cry.[c]

Partridge-hunting (*v.* 20).—This verse refers to a sport still practised by the Arabs, and even indulged in by children. A traveller says, "About four in the afternoon we entered the valley in which Mahaimah's camp was placed. As we approached we beheld a very animated and busy scene: the girls were singing, and the children busied in running down the young partridges with dogs, as they were as yet only able to fly a short distance at a time."

21—25. (21) **have sinned,** ch. xv. 30. **soul,** life. **played the fool,** Saul's repentance is as gushing and impetuous as his sin. (22) **over and fetch it,** Dav. gives no indic. of trusting Saul's sudden impulse. (23) Comp. ch. xxiv. 17—19. (24) **tribulation,** De. iv. 30. (25) Ch. xxiv. 21, 22.

Saul's second reconciliation (*v.* 25).—I. It is proved that the deepest and sincerest emotion may be transient in its moral effects. Two things are often mistaken for Christian feeling. 1. Selfish gratitude for unexpected preservation; 2. Admiration of moral nobleness in others. II. It is shown that self-control is in proportion to the estimate formed of the Divine element that is in man. We shall thus be enabled—1. To hope something even of the worst; 2. To do something in the negative work of sparing, even when we cannot do anything in the positive work of reclaiming. III. It is shown how much better it is to trust our interests to the working out of Divine laws than to care for them with narrowness of spirit. IV. It is clearly shown that flight from danger is perfectly compatible with the highest courage. There is a time to fight (Goliath); there is a time to fly (Saul). There are differences of conquest. David conquered Saul as surely as he conquered Goliath.[a]

Doctrine of forgiveness.—The venerable Dr. Duff once read the Sermon on the Mount to a number of Hindu youths; and when

cave, and called after him. Now he feared lest Saul should endeavour to get him into his power when he awoke. As the day was only just breaking, he could not see David, but at once recognised the voice.

Friendship cannot stand aye on one side.—*Scotch.*

David expostulates with Saul

a Wordsworth.

Others suppose that Dav. suggests to Saul that *he* should offer a sacrifice to God, in order that he may be relieved of his unworthy suspicions.

b Ps. xlii. 1—5.

c Heb., *koré,* fr. *kara,* to cry. See also Jer. xvii. 11.

Saul and David are again reconciled

v. 21. *J. A. Miller, Playing the Fool, Saul, King of Israel,* 178.

a Dr. Parker

"Nothing is more moving to man than the spectacle of reconciliation; our weaknesses are thus indemnified, and are not too costly, being the price we pay for the hour of forgiveness; and the archangel who has never felt anger, has reason to envy the man who subdues it. When thou forgivest, the man

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who has pierced thy heart stands to thee in the relation of the sea worm, that perforates the shell of the mussel, which straightway closes the wound with a pearl."—*Richter.*

he came to the passage, "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you," so deep and intense was the impression produced on one of them, that he exclaimed in ecstasy, "Oh! how beautiful, how Divine! this is the truth, this is the truth!" And for days and weeks, he could not help repeating, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you," etc.; constantly exclaiming, "How beautiful! surely this is the truth!" Nor could he rest until he had renounced his false gods and their senseless worship, and accepted the truth as it is in Jesus.

B.C. *cir.* 1058.

David flees to the king of Gath

a "This was wrong as acting apart fr. the Div. oracle; and as rushing into the evil associations of an idolatrous land."—*Jamieson.*

b "It is not determined whether Achish was a personal name or an official title." — *Wordsworth.*

c Comp. Josh. xv. 31, xix. 5; 2 Sa. i. 1, iv. 10.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

v. 1. *W. Jay, Short Disc.* iv. 321; *H. Lindsay, Lect.* i. 306; *R. P. Buddicom,* ii. 132.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Roberts.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1–7. (1) **in his heart,** falling into despondency: hopeless of ever really appeasing Saul. This Dav.'s time of darkness: explains his seeking refuge in Gath.[a] (2) **Achish,**[b] as ch. xxi. 11, or a son. **Maoch,** 1 Ki. ii. 39. **Gath,** ch. xxi. 10. (3) **with his household,** explaining request for a town to dwell in. *v.* 5. (4) **no more,** as Dav. expected, *v.* 1. (5) **why .. city,** so occasioning expense, and perhaps national trouble. (6) **Ziklag,** a Simeonite town, wh. had been taken by the Phil.[c] In the south country, or *Negeb.* (7) **time,** lit. number of days.

The unbelieving fears of David (*v.* 1).—Consider—I. In what light we should regard these fears of David. 1. There was great occasion for fear. The malignity of Saul against him was deeply rooted; bent on David's destruction, he had recourse to every expedient he could devise; besides his own immediate servants, Saul had traitors in confederacy with him; moreover, he persevered, notwithstanding checks from God and his own conscience; 2. Still, in entertaining desponding fear, David sinned. II. What similar apprehensions we have to guard against. We have God's promises of future glory; but we have many enemies.[d]

The keeper of the head (*v.* 2).—The head is always spoken of as the principal part of the body, and when a man places great confidence in another, he says, "I will make him the keeper of my life or head." An injured man expostulating with another, to whom he has been kind, asks, "Why is this? have I not been the keeper of your life?" A good brother is called, "the life-keeping brother." But anything valuable also is spoken of as being on the head.[e]

David invades the Geshurites, etc.

a 1 Sa. xv. 2.

b Nu. xxiv. 21, 22; 1 Sa. xv. 6.

c "When any word, or sentence, admits of more significations than one, whether from common use, or

8–12. (8) **Geshurites,** Jos. xiii. 2. **Gezrites,** prob. should be *Gerzites.* **Amalekites,** some branches left fr. destruction of Saul.[a] **Shur,** Ge. xvi. 7. (9) **left .. alive,** lest his intended deception of Achish should be discovered. *v.* 11. **came to Achish,** to give him his royal portion of the booty. (10) **south of Judah,** producing the impression that he had utterly given up his own country, and was helping the Phil. do it mischief. **Jerahmeelites,** 1 Chr. ii. 5–9. **Kenites,**[b] Ge. xv. 19. (11) See *v.* 9. (12) **utterly to abhor,** as a public enemy.

David's answer explained (*v.* 10).—After the expedition was over, David returns to Achish, and upon being asked where he had made his incursion, David answers: Against **the south of**

Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. Mr. Bayle, not with extreme good manners, calls this a lie. But, with his leave, the answer was literally true, but ambiguous; for all those people dwelt on the south of Judah, etc. Achish, through self-partiality, understood the answer to mean that the incursion was made on the southern borders of Judah, the Jerahmeelites and Kenites themselves, though David asserted no such thing. David, therefore, was not guilty of any falsity; and if he was in anything to blame, it was for giving an ambiguous answer to a question to which he was not obliged to give any direct reply. Mr. Bayle says, "This conduct was very unjustifiable, in that he deceived a king to whom he had obligations." But David's answer was not such as necessarily to impose on Achish, and therefore it may be as truly said that Achish put a deceit upon himself, as that David deceived him. I allow he intended to conceal from Achish who the people were that he invaded, and this he did not by a lie but by an answer true in fact. The precise determined truth was, that he had made an incursion on the south of Judah and the Kenites. The Amalekites dwelt on the south of Judah, and the Kenites lived intermingled with them, till they removed by Saul's order, when he was sent to destroy the Amalekites, and probably returned to their former dwellings, after that expedition was over. It is certain, at least, that they were much in the same situation as before, viz., on the south of Judah, and at no great distance from the country of the Amalekites; and therefore Achish might as reasonably have understood David's answer to mean, that he invaded the Amalekites and neighbouring hordes, who dwelt beyond the south parts of Judah, as that he invaded the southern parts of the very country of Judah. For the original words will equally bear this double version: against the country south of Judah, etc., and against the south country of Judah. If Achish took David in a wrong sense, I do not see that David, in his circumstances, was obliged to undeceive him. For as he had done Achish no injury in the expedition against the Amalekites, etc., so neither did he in permitting him quietly to impose on himself. Whereas, had he convinced Achish of his mistake, he would have endangered his own life, and the destruction of all his people. The greatest and best casuists have allowed that ambiguous answers are not always criminal, but sometimes justifiable, and particularly in the critical situation in which David now was.[c]

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the custom of art, or by any intelligible figure; and if the sense of one's own mind agrees to any one of these interpretations, it is no lie, though we should have reason to think, that he who hears us should take it in the other. Such a manner of speaking should not be used rashly; but it may be justified by antecedent causes; as when it is for the instruction of him who is committed to our care, or when it is to avoid an unjust interrogation, *i.e.* as Gronovius explains it, such an interrogation, which, if we gave a simple plain answer to, would hazard our own safety, or that of other innocent persons." — *Grotius.*

Little presents keep up friendship.—*French.*

c *Chandler.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1056.

1–6. (1) **those days,** end of period, ch. xxvii. 7. **thou shalt go,** *etc.*, Achish made sure of his willingness.[a] (2) **surely . . do,** an equivocal answer, wh. sounded like acceptance. **keeper of mine head,** captain of my bodyguard. (3) Comp. xxv. 1; introduced to show why Saul sought Witch of Endor. He had prob. put away the wizards, etc., in early part of his reign. **familiar spirit,** *etc.*, Ex. xxii. 18; Le. xix. 31, xx. 27, etc. (4) **Shunem,** present *Sôlam*, E. side of plain of Jezreel, 8 m. S.W. of Mt. Tabor. **Gilboa,** now *Jebel Fukûah*.[b] (5, 6) **enquired,** as usual before a battle.

Saul perplexed by the Philistines

a "Dav.'s deceptions secured the favour of the king, but very seriously injured himself."—*Ewald.*

b "The position occupied by Israelites under

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Gideon." — *Stanley.*
See *Origen, Op.* ii. 490; *Gregory, Mys. Op.* ii. 35; *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*; *Michaël Rothardus, Crit. Sac.* ii.; *Noel Alexander, Hist. Eccles.* iii. 124; *J. Penn. Tracts* (1756), 119.

vv. 6, 7. *P. Stubbs, A Ser.* (1730), *T. Dawson. Dissert.*
"Fear naturally represses invention, benevolence, ambition; for, in a nation of slaves, as in the despotic governments of the East, to labour after fame is to be a candidate for danger."— *Goldsmith.*
"Fear sometimes adds wings to the heels, and sometimes nails them to the ground, and fetters them from moving."— *Montaigne.*
"Fear is far more painful to cowardice, than death to true courage." — *Sir Philip Sidney.*
c Chandler.

Saul repairs to a witch at Endor

a Spk. Com.

b "Phil. lay encamped between Saul's camp at Gilboa and Endor. Saul probkept to the E. of Jezreel crossed the valley below *Am Jalud* and thence over the shoulder of Hermon to Endor." — *Thomson.*

c 1 Chr. x. 13, 14

e. 7. *C. W. Le Bas*, iii. 245; *P. Hughes, Fem. Char.* ii. 178.

A difficulty explained (*vv.* 1, 2).—Soon after these transactions, while David yet remained in the territories of the Philistines, they formed their army to invade the Hebrews, when Achish said to David; Know thou assuredly that thou and thy men shall go with me to the camp; his troops being now increased by a party from the tribe of Manasseh. David answered him: Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do; *i.e.* as some interpret the words: Achish met with a cheerful compliance from David; and Mr. Bayle affirms, that it was not owing to David that he did not fight under the standard of this Philistine prince against the Israelites, in the unhappy war wherein Saul perished; or, as he further says, that when the Philistines had assembled their forces, David and his brave adventurers joined the army of Achish, and would have fought like lions against their brethren, if the suspicious Philistines had not forced Achish to dismiss them. I am extremely glad, however, that the princes of the Philistines, who may reasonably be supposed to know as much of David's dispositions and views as any modern writers can do, were of a quite different opinion from Mr. Bayle and his followers; who, instead of believing with Achish and Mr. Bayle, that David would have been so very fierce against his own people, made no doubt but he would have fought like a lion, or a tiger, against Achish and the Philistines. And, indeed, David's answer to Achish implies nothing like a cheerful compliance with him, to engage with his forces against his own people. Achish did not directly ask this, and therefore David had no occasion to make the promise. The demand was only that he would go to the camp. And the answer was, that he would there make Achish witness to his conduct. But this was so far from promising that he would employ his men, as Achish promised himself, as that it seems rather to imply a kind of denial; and would appear, I believe, very unsatisfactory to most persons in like circumstances: "You shall see what I will do. I make no promise, but I will go with you to the camp, where you yourself will be judge of my conduct." An evidently cold and evasive answer.[c]

7—10. (7) **woman,** *etc.*, lit. *one who is mistress of an ob*, or skin-bottle, so prob. meaning "the distended belly of the ventriloquist."[a] **Endor,**[b] village on N. side of Little Hermon. (8) **disguised,** 1 Ki. xx. 38. xxii. 30. **divine,**[c] Ge. xliv. 15; De. xviii. 14. **bring up,** fr. Sheol, this the supposed art of *necromancy*. (9) (*v.* 3) **snare,** by inducing her to do what would subject her to law. (10) **by the Lord,** a wicked oath, seeing he was not serving the Lord.

Endor (*v.* 7).—As we approached Endor we could fancy the very walk which Saul took over the eastern shoulder of the hill to reach the witch's abode, skirting Little Hermon, on the front slopes of which the Philistines were encamped, in order to reach the village behind them: a long and weary distance from his own army by the fountain of Jezreel, on the side of Gilboa. It might be fancy, but the place has a strange, weird-like aspect; a miserable village on the north side of the hill, without a tree or a shrub to relieve the squalor of its decaying heaps. It is full of caves, and the mud-built hovels are stuck on to the sides of the rocks in clusters, and are, for the most part, a mere continuation or enlargement of the cavern behind, which forms the larger

portion of the human den. The inhabitants were the most filthy and ragged we had seen; and as the old crones, startled at the rare apparition of strangers strolling near their holes, came forth and cursed us, a Holman Hunt might have immortalised on canvas the very features of the necromancer of Israel. Endor has shrunk from its former extent; and there are many caves around, with crumbling heaps at their mouths, the remains, probably, of what once were other habitations.[d]

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vv. 7, 8. *D. S. Beyling*, ii. 253.

vv. 8—11. *Dr. J. Edwards, Exercit.* 71.

d Dr. Tristram.

Saul desires the witch to raise up Samuel

11—14. (11) **bring . . Samuel,** in his extremity, Saul turns to the friend of his earlier days.[a] (12) **she cried,** evidently amazed at her own success. It is clearly intended to declare that this was a *real* appearance of Samuel. **thou art Saul,** being sure Sam. would come for no one less than the king, and recog. him by stature, etc. (13) **gods,** *elohim*, put generally to express a supernatural appearance. Not intended to be *plural*. (14) **mantle,** the *meil*, or coat, as ch. ii. 19, characteristic garment of Sam.[b]

Saul at Endor (*v.* 11).—"Bring me up Samuel." This is the cry of a soul—I. Consciously deserted of God. 1. God does sometimes desert the sinner even in this world: 2. The consciousness of this desertion is the greatest misery. II. Profoundly convinced of the value of a once neglected ministry. III. That had become the victim of delusions. IV. Plunging into the depths of despair.[c]

Description of a witch.—

> At length in murmurs hoarse her voice was heard;
> Her voice beyond all plants, all magic, fear'd,
> And by the lowest Stygian gods revered.
> Her gabbling tongue a muttering tone confounds,
> Discordant, and unlike to human sounds;
> It seem'd of dogs the bark, of wolves the howl;
> The doleful screechings of the midnight owl;
> The hiss of snakes, the hungry lion's roar;
> The sound of billows beating on the shore;
> The groan of winds among the leafy wood,
> And burst of thunder from the rending cloud;—
> 'Twas these, all these in one.[d]

a "Something unutterably pathetic in that yearning of the disappointed king, now in his utter desolation, to change words once more with the friend and counsellor of his youth, and if he must hear his doom, to hear it fr. no other lips but his."—*Trench.*

b 1 Sa. xv. 27.

v 11. *J. A. Miller*, 201.

vv. 11, 12. *Calmet, Comment.* ii. 331.

c Dr. Thomas.

d Rowe.

Samuel speaks to Saul

15—20. (15) **Sam. said,** he being the first to speak. The ans. of Saul reveals his pettish, passionate spirit; he is evidently not heart-humbled, only vexed.[a] (16) **of me,** seeing I am the Lord's servant. (17) **to him,** or *for himself*. **rent,** as ch. xv. 27, 28. Obs. the refer. to Saul's violent death and that of his sons in this term. (18) **on Amalek,** ch. xv. 1—3. (19) **Israel with thee,** Saul's disobedience involving the people in defeat and ruin. (20) **all along,** *his full length:* fainting at the dreadful tidings.

Saul; or humanity consciously deserted of God (*vv.* 15, 16).—Two stages in the history of human depravity. (1) Man deserts God; (2) God deserts man. The second and final stage Saul had reached. Consider that humanity, under a consciousness of God's desertion—I. Will ever be impressed with the need of the forfeited means of Divine communion. II. Becomes the subject of fearful delusions. Saul believes the witch. His imagination—1. Presents a vivid vision of the Teacher whose counsel had been neglected; 2. Proclaims the sin and pronounces the doom. III.

a "Why does not Saul name the *Urim*. He shrank from naming to Sam. that which must bring to mind his slaughter of the priests at Nob."—*Kitto.*

v. 15. *C. Simeon*, iii. 230.

vv. 15, 16. *Dr. D. Waterland.* ix. 411; *H. Lindsay*, i. 321.

v. 19. *Dr. J. Dupre*, i. 307.

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Must sink into unmitigated despair. The guilty mind, in despair, loses—1. Hope; 2. Purpose; 3. Sympathy.[b]

Effects of sorrow and fear (*v.* 20).—When people are under the influence of great sorrow or fear, they always do the same thing, and roll themselves along, making bitter lamentations. And when men have escaped great danger, they roll themselves on the earth to the distance of a quarter of a mile, after the car of the temple, in performance of their vow.[c]

21—25. (21) sore troubled, more mentally than bodily. Prob. Saul only received Sam.'s message. **life in my hand,** running great risk to serve you. (22) She entreats him much as one would a spoilt child. (23) **compelled** him, urged him until they succeeded. **bed,** bench, which in E. runs along the wall. (24) **killed it,** by broiling slices it would soon be ready.[a] (25) **that night,** the night before Saul's doom (*v.* 19).

Cooking food in the East (*vv.* 24, 25).—This calf was killed, dressed, cooked, and eaten in as short a time as possible; which might be called for from the necessity of the guest. But it is evident from other passages that it was a custom to kill, cook, and eat an animal in a very short time. The heat of the climate certainly prevents flesh from being kept many hours, but there is no need to put the animal on the fire while its flesh is still warm. The people affect to be disgusted with us for keeping fowls six or eight hours before they are cooked, and say we are fond of eating *chettarcyche*, *i.e.* dead flesh. There are some Englishmen who become so accustomed to these things, that they have the chicken grilled and on their table, which a quarter of an hour before was playing in their yard.[b]

the witch provides food for Saul

[a] Ge. xviii. 7, 8.

"What see you there that hath so cowarded and chased your blood out of appearance?"—*Shakespeare.*

"Oh! that fear, when the heart longs to know what it is death to hear."—*Croly.*

[b] *Roberts.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1056.

1—5. (1) **Aphek,**[a] comp. 1 Sa. iv. 1, name is given to several places in Canaan. **fountain,** *etc.*, fine spring *Ain Jalud*.[b] (2) **lords,** Ju. iii. 3. **rereward,** forming a part of the rearguard (ch. xxviii. 2). (3) **princes,** as distinct fr. lords, the chiefs of the smaller cities. **fell,** deserted his master, and came to me. (4) **wroth,** they feared Dav.'s going over to Saul's side in the battle. **his place,** *Ziklag*. (5) Comp. ch. xviii. 7, xxi. 11.

David marching with the Philistines

[a] "Not neces. near Shunem (*v.* 11), but on the road thither fr. the Phil. district."—*Bib. Dict.*

"It is unlikely that the Phil. lords would suffer David to march with them all the way to Jezreel; it is much more prob. that they mustered at Aphek in Mt. Ephraim."—*Spk. Com.*

A renegade's reward.—I. We have David in a new and strange character: the friend and ally of the foes of his king and country. II. Notwithstanding his declarations of prowess (xxviii. 2) he is sent into the rear; the place of honour reserved for others. III. Even there he is an object of suspicion.

Historical fountains (*v.* 1).—The Archbishop of Tyre tells us (*Gesta dei*), that the Christian kings of Jerusalem used to assemble their forces at a fountain between Nazareth and Sepphoris, which was greatly celebrated on that account. This being looked upon to be nearly the centre of their kingdom, they could from thence, consequently, march most commodiously to any place where their presence was wanted. He mentions also another fountain near a town called Little Gerinum, which, he says, was the ancient Jezreel; near this Saladin pitched his camp, for the benefit of its waters, while Baldwin, King of Jesusalem, had, as usual, assembled his army at the first-mentioned place. Of the fountain Ain-el-Scandcroni, Buckingham remarks, "This is a modern

work; the charitable gift, perhaps, of some pious Mussulman, being well built, with a cistern beneath an arch, whence issue two streams, and over which is an Arabic inscription of several lines. It has, besides, a square platform, walled in for prayers, shelter or refreshment, and a flight of steps ascending to it, with a dome of a sepulchre, now partly buried by the falling in of adjacent ruins."[c]

Fountain in the desert.—

This sycamore, oft musical with bees—
Such tents the patriarchs loved! O long unharm
May all its aged boughs o'er canopy
The small round basin, which this jutting stone
Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller,
With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a fairy's page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the fount,
Here twilight is and coolness: here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou may'st toil far and find no second tree.

6–11. (6) **in the host,** or army. (7) **displease not,** Achish might fear his own rupture with the other lords. (8) This ans. must be regarded as keeping up the part wh. Dav. was now acting. He did not really want to fight Saul. (9) **as an angel,** faithful, true and pure as one, : a fig. of Eastern extravagance. (10) **master's servants,**[a] 1 Chr. xii. 19–21. (11) **early,** with the first light, as *v.* 10.

David's atheistic reasoning (*v.* 6).—Review the afflictions laid on David by the Philistines. I. The secret of David's ill-fortunes amongst the Philistines, found in xxvii. 1. He took the case into his own hands. Three things in life which must lead to disappointment, shame and ruin: (1) Atheistic self-trust; (2) immoral and unnatural associations; and (3) Duplicity and equivocation. II. The question was how to get out of those difficulties and resume the old relations? Way of error never easy. He is delivered through the wrath of his enemies: (1) God does not easily or willingly cast off His erring children; (2) Social injustice or cruelty may have a meaning never intended by its perpetrators; (3) The destruction of present securities may prepare the way for complete and enduring rest. III. Though David had experienced severe trials manifestly sent by the hand of God, he was to be saved from ruinous conclusions by seeing what it was to fall into the hands of men. IV. A better spirit came unto David. For a time David had taken his life into his own hand, *now* he returned unto God and made his peace with heaven.[b]

A Persian fable (*influence of association*).—

"One day
A wanderer found a lump of clay,
So redolent of rich perfume,
Its odour scented all his room.
'What art thou?' was his quick demand
'Art thou some gum from Samarcand?

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c Burder.

"Unperishing youth! thou leapest from forth the cell of thy hidden nativity; never mortal saw the cradle of the strong one; never mortal heard the gathering of his voices; the deep-murmur'd charm of the son of the rock, that is lisped evermore at his slumberless fountain."—*Coleridge.*

Achish dismisses David

a "The clue to this difficult expression may be found in the fact that about this time a considerable number of Manassites joined Dav., and went back with him to Ziklag."—*Spk. Com.*

b Dr. Parker.

"If a spring be fouled on its way down the brae, it will soon brighten up again, for the clear water behind will wash away all impurities; but when the fountain-head has the foul stain in it, there is naething can purify that away,—naething else but mixing it with the ocean of eternity, and then rising again to the heavens, purified to dew."—*Hogg.*

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"On what strange grounds we build our hopes and fears: man's life is all a mist, and in the dark our fortunes meet us. Whether we drive, or whether we are driven, if ill, 'tis ours; if good, the act of heaven." — *Dryden.*

Or spikenard in a rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise !'
'Nay, I am but a lump of clay.'
'Then whence this wondrous sweetness, say ?'
'Friend, if the secret I disclose,
I have been dwelling with the rose.'
Meet parable ! and will not those
Who love to dwell with Sharon's Rose,
Distil sweet scents o'er all around,
Tho' poor and mean themselves be found !
Good Lord, abide with us, that we
May catch these odours fresh from Thee !"

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

Ziklag taken by the Amalekites

a 1 Sa. xxvii. 8, 9

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*, Ziklag spoiled; also *Saurin's Disc. Hist.* v. 1.

"My grief lies all within; and these external manners of lament are merely shadows to the unseen grief, that swells with silence in the tortured soul; there lies the substance." — *Shakespeare.*

b Marlow.

1—5. (1) **Amalekites,** Ge. xiv. 7, not *all* the tribes destroyed by Saul. Dav. had attacked them.[a] **the south,** Negeb. Jos. xv. 21. (2) **slew not any,** bec. no warriors were left to fight them, so all was carried off as booty. (3) **burned,** prob. still burning. (4) **wept,** in desperation of grief. (5) **two wives,** 1 Sa. xxv. 42, 43.

A great grief (*v.* 4).—I. Note the occasion of this grief. II. Note the greatness of it. III. Note the lessons suggested by it. (1) The strength of human affection ; (2) Departures from integrity involve men in misery ; (3) How much more should men grieve over their sins and their loss of the Divine favour.

The different effects of grief.—

The griefs of private men are soon allay'd,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds ;
But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
And highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air.[b]

David inquires of the Lord

a Comp. Ps. iii. 6, vi., xiii., xvi., xvii.

v. 6. *Dr. R. Harris, Wks.* 55; *J. Milner, M.A., Ss.* i. 253.

b Wm. Stevens.

God looks not at the pomp of words and variety of expression, but at the sincerity and devotion of the heart. The key opens the door, not because it is gilt, but because it fits the lock.

6—10. (6) **grieved,** Heb. *bitter,* desperate. **encouraged himself,** learning in his extremity of trouble to take hold of the help of God.[a] (7) **Abiathar,** ch. xxiii. 6. (8) **he answered,** God through the high priest. (9) **brook Besor,** a torrent flowing into the Mediter. near Gaza. The *Wady Sheriah.* (10) **so faint,** with the journey fr. Aphek, the grief of the loss, and the hurried pursuit. Leaving them with the baggage enabled the rest to get on more quickly.

David encouraging himself (*v.* 6).—I. Enumerate the particulars in which we may reasonably conclude David encouraged himself with a reflection on—(1) God's past dealings and deliverances ; (2) God's love to His children ; (3) His infinite compassion ; (4) His faithfulness ; (5) His power ; (6) His omnipresence ; (7) His omniscience. II. The advantage of encouragement on these grounds—(1) The promise of God. *v.* 8 ; (2) The leading of Providence, *v.* 11—15 ; (3) The restoration of property, *v.* 18, 19. Application—(1) To bewildered seekers ; (2) To thirsting believers ; (3) To convicted backsliders.[b]

Inquiring of the Lord (*v.* 8).—The chosen people of Jehovah, not less eager than others to know the issue of their military

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expeditions, or if heaven regarded their undertakings with a favourable eye, had frequent recourse to the holy oracle; they consulted the prophet of the Lord; they offered sacrifices, and consulted with the high-priest who bore the Urim and Thummim in his breastplate, by means of which he discovered the will of the Deity; or, presenting himself at the altar of incense, received the desired response by an audible voice from the most holy place. The son of Jesse, in a time of great distress and perplexity, consulted the oracle by means of an ephod, a part of sacerdotal vestments: "And David said to Abiathar the priest, Abimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod; and Abiathar brought hither the ephod to David. And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And He answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Here was no brightening of arrows, after the custom of superstitious heathens; no consulting with images, nor inspecting of intestines, from which nothing but vague conjecture can result; but a devout and humble application to the throne of the true God: and the answer was in every respect worthy of His character; it was clear and precise, at once authorising the pursuit, and promising complete success; or forbidding them in plain terms, to prosecute their designs.[c]

"Many favours which God giveth us ravel out for want of hemming; for though prayer purchaseth blessings, giving praise doth keep the quiet possession of them."—*Fuller.*

"Pray always." You will never want a motive to prayer, if you never forget the promises made to believing prayer.

c Paxton.

11–15. (11) **in the field,** one who had fallen sick, *v.* 13. (12) **spirit came,** he had fainted for want of food. (13) **servant,** slave. **left me,** "an incidental trait of cruelty in the character of the Amalekites, they had camels, but left the poor slave to die in the desert."[a] (14) **Cherethites,**[b] another name for the Philistines, prob. the southern part of their country, *v.* 16. (15) **swear,** *etc.*, anxious to secure his own safety.

To whom belongest thou? (*v.* 13).—No neutralities in religion. I. Have you been "born again?" Without the new birth, you cannot be Christ's. II. In whom do you trust? Those who believe in Jesus are the sons of God. III. Whose work are you doing? He whom you serve is thereby owned to be your Lord. IV. What company do you keep? "Birds of a feather," etc. V. What is your conversation? heavenly or earthly? VI. What have you learned of your Master? If you are Christ's, let me advise you to do four things. You belong to—I. Jesus: obey Him. II. The Beloved; then love Him. III. The Son of God: trust Him. IV. The King of kings: then be decided for Him.[c]

Houseless and starving (*vv.* 11, 12).—Thevenot says, "At about five o'clock in the morning, when passing by the side of a bush, we heard a voice that called to us, and being come to the place, we found a poor languishing Arab, who told us that he had not eaten a bit for five days: we gave him some victuals and drink, with a provision of bread for two days more." This was on the journey from Suez to Tor.[d]

the Egyptian guide

a Wordsworth.

b Some connect this word with the island, Creto. Comp. Eze. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5; Jer. xlvii. 4; Am. ix. 7. See also 2 Sa. viii. 18, xv. 18, xx. 23.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

16–20. (16) **spread abroad,** not suspecting danger, so taking no precautions against surprise. (17) **twilight,**[a] evening time, pursuing them in their flight during the next day. **young men,** the servants who had charge of the camels (*v.* 13). (18) **all,** except what was consumed in the feasting. (19) It was much indeed to recover all uninjured. (20) **David's spoil,** the Amalekite herds; for Dav.'s men spoiled their camp.

David spoils the Amalekites

a "If the twilight is the morning twilight, as the com-

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trast bet. *twilight and evening* rather suggests, the natural explanation would be that David arrived at night, and found them drinking and dancing, but put off his attack till the twilight, when they were still sleeping securely after their revelry." — *Spk. Com.*

"For danger levels man and brute, and all are fellows in their need."—*Byron.*

"Fear, though blind, is swift and strong." — *Dr. Mackay.*

b *Chandler.*

The slaughter of the Amalekites (*v.* 17).—There were two reasons, exclusive of all religious considerations, that fully justified David in this attack upon the Amalekites. He now resided among the Philistines, in whose country these Amalekites had made great depredations, while the Philistines themselves were engaged in war with the Hebrews, and incapable of defending their own frontiers. He was their ally, obliged to act in their favour, and behaved like a soldier of honour in avenging the injuries that had been done them. This insult of David therefore upon the Amalekites was not unprovoked, if we consider his connection with the Philistines; much less, if we add to this, the loss he himself and his men sustained. For surely the burning of the city where he dwelt, the leading captive into slavery his own wives, and the wives and children of above six hundred persons, and the making a booty of all their substance, must have been the highest provocation to men that had any feeling of natural affection. David and his soldiers thought it so; and if it be lawful to put to death incendiaries, women and children stealers, thieves, robbers, and vagabonds, David's executing this vengeance on the Amalekites for their treachery in making this invasion, and committing these unprovoked violences, while neither the Philistines nor Hebrews could defend their territories, was a deserved and necessary severity.[b]

the spoil divided

a See marg. Ju. xviii. 15.

b Ju. xix. 22.

c Nu. xxxi. 27; Jos. xxii. 8.

"The character of covetousness is what a man generally acquires more through some niggardliness or ill grace in little and inconsiderable things, than in expenses of any consequence. A very few pounds a year would ease that man of the scandal of avarice."—*Pope.*

"A willing heart adds feather to the heel, and makes the clown a winged Mercury." — *Joanna Baillie.*

d *Roberts.*

David sends presents to

21—25. (21) **forth to meet,** being now rested and refreshed. **saluted,**[a] kindly. (22) **wicked . . Belial,**[b] De. xiii. 13. Their argument was that these men had fainted from the work, so had no right to share its results. (23) Indication of Dav.'s firmness, fairness, and power to rule. **Lord hath given us,** Dav. has recovered his high religious tone. (24) **stuff,**[c] baggage. All sharing the work were to share the spoil. (25) **statute,** *etc.*, a recognised war regulation.

The reward of the willing but weak (*v.* 24).—I. In the great conflict between the forces of truth and error, there will always be some (aged, sick, etc.,) unable to engage in the battle. II. In such a case, the harsh judgment of the uncharitable shall not decide their relation to the victory. III. The truly willing shall not be impoverished by their inability. IV. The moral effect of this rule upon those who fight and those who stay at home.

Salutations (*v.* 21).—"Saluted them." Hebrew, "asked them how they did." It is in the East, as in England, a common mode of salutation to inquire after the health. They do not, however, answer in the same unhesitating way. When a man has perfectly recovered from a fit of sickness, he will not say, "I am quite well," because he would think that like boasting, and be afraid of a relapse; he would, therefore, say, "I am a little better—not quite so ill as I was." Sometimes, when the question is asked, he will reply, "Can you not see for yourself? what answer can I give?" To say you look well, or have become stout, is very annoying. A short time after my arrival in Ceylon, a very stout Brahmin paid me a visit, and on my saying he looked remarkably well, he fell into a great rage, and left the room. I explained to him afterwards that I did not mean any offence, and he said it was very unfortunate to be addressed in such language.[d]

26—31. (26) **elders of Judah,** this was Dav.'s first oppor-

tunity of acknowledging the kindness and protection accorded to him during his persecutions. It was also a piece of good policy in making them favourable to his claim of kingship.[a] (27) **Bethel**, Ge. xii. 8. **Ramoth**, *Ramath*,[b] Jos. xix. 8. **Jattir**, Jos. xv. 48. (28) **Aroer**, unknown town in Judah.[c] Not Aroer on the Arnon. **Siphmoth**, *site unknown*. **Eshtemoa**, Jos. xv. 50. (29) **Rachal**,[d] unknown. **Jerahmeelites**, ch. xxvii. 10. **Kenites**, ch. xv. 6. (30) **Hormah**, Jos. xii. 14. **Chor-ashan**, comp. Jos. xv. 42. **Athach**, poss. *Ether*, of Jos. xix. 7. (31) **Hebron**, Jos. xiv. 14, 15. **wont to haunt**, during persecution.

Gratitude (*the ruined merchant*).—Some years ago, a poor boy came to town in search of a situation as errand-boy. He made many unsuccessful applications, and was on the eve of returning to his parents, when a gentleman, prepossessed by his appearance, took him into his employment, and, after a few months, bound him apprentice. He so conducted himself during his apprenticeship as to gain the love and esteem of every one who knew him, and after he had served his time his master advanced a capital for him to commence business with. He retired to his closet with a heart glowing with gratitude to God for His goodness, and solemnly vowed that he would devote a tenth part of his annual income to the cause of God. The first year his donation amounted to £10, which he gave cheerfully, and continued to do so till it amounted to £500; he then thought that was a great deal of money to give, and that he need not be so particular as to the exact amount. That year he lost a ship and cargo, to the value of £15,000, by a storm! This caused him to repent, and he again commenced his contributions, with a resolution never to retract. He was more successful every year, and at length retired. He still devoted a tenth part of his annual income for some years, till he became acquainted with men of the world, who by degrees drew him aside from God. He discontinued his donations, made large speculations, lost everything, and became almost as poor as when he came to town a poor errand-boy.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—6. (1) **slain**, or wounded, espec. by Phil. arrows. **in Mount Gilboa**, either the battle took place in plain of Jezreel, and Is. sought refuge in the mount, or battle was fought on sides of Gilboa, which the Phil. stormed. (2) **upon Saul**, completion of victory was capturing the king. **his sons**, ch. xiv. 49; 1 Chr. viii. 33, x. 2. (3) **archers**, lit. *shooters, men with the bow*. **wounded**, or *afraid*,[a] in anguish. (4) **uncircumcised**, usual descrip. of Phil. ch. xiv. 6. **abuse me**, as a captive king.[b] (5) This act indic. attachment bet. an armour-bearer and his lord. (6) **all his men**, or his *house*.[c]

Slain Jonathan (*v.* 2).—I. A perplexing fact: Jonathan cut off in the full strength of manhood, after a life of self-sacrifice and piety. II. A too frequent occurrence: a Jonathan slain by Philistines. III. A mournful remembrance: a Jonathan dead on a battle field. IV. A strengthening hope: the Philistines slew him; that was all they could do; the affectionate, valorous nature suffered no contamination, and was exalted to a presence

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his old friends

a "It was the dictate of an amiable and grateful heart—and the effect of this well-timed liberality was to bring a large accession of numbers to his camp."—*Jamieson.*

b Prob. same as *Baalath-Beer.*

c Ruins found in *Wady 'Ar'arah*, about 11 miles W.S.W. fr. *Beersheba.*"—*Robinson.*

d LXX. gives it *Carmi.*

"Which makes each generous impulse of my nature warm into ecstasy."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"The truly generous is the truly wise; and he who loves not others, lives unblest."—*Home*

the death of Saul and his sons

a Gesenius.

LXX. trans. "And he was wounded in the hypochondries," the soft part of the body between the breastbone and the navel.

b Jos. viii. 29, x. 24; Ju. viii. 21.

c 1 Chr. x. 6.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.* Death of Saul.

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more congenial than even that of David. V. A soul-stirring analogy: Gilboa, with the corpse of Jonathan, speaks of Calvary and our slain Lord.[d]

The Philistines slew Jonathan.—A Jonathan slain by Philistines. They knew nothing of him, except that he was a king's son, and their enemy. They knew not of the disinterested love which lived in his breast—which could forego a crown rather than prejudice the future of a friend. They knew not of the marvellous wisdom by which he remained a filial son, albeit he was the friend of one to whom his father was an adversary. They knew not of the wealth of virtue, piety, and valour of which they deprived the world in slaying Jonathan; nor did they care to know. I have seen a noble and ingenuous youth, night by night, reverently saluting his mother; day by day filially obeying his father; year by year brightening his parents' hearts with joy and gratitude. In an evil hour, a wild, worldly companion gains his ear—laughs at his tenderness and gentleness—weans him from home and childlikeness. And I said, "The Philistines have slain Jonathan, and knew not the moral beauty of which they deprived a house." I have seen a husband—the strong and gentle companion of a trusting wife—gradually led away by vicious men to a gay and wicked course, and I have said, "The Philistines have slain Jonathan, and knew not what a wealth of love has perished from society." Alas, other swords than those of steel, and other men than soldiers, repeat the catastrophe of Gilboa! Go anywhere in society, and you see men who are no more like their former selves than the corpse was like living Jonathan.[e]

7—10. (7) **other . . valley,** either west of Jezreel,[a] or north, and so including the cities of Naphtali and Zabulon.[b] **other side Jordan,** or Jordan-wards; not here distinctly referring to country E. of the river. **forsook the cities,** expecting Phil. would plunder and destroy. **dwelt in them,** so at Saul's death one part of the land was virtually in the hands of his rival, and the other part in the hands of his foes. (8) **morrow,** after a day of fighting. (9) **house,** or temple. (10) **Ashtaroth,**[c] Ju. ii. 13. **Beth-shan,** Jos. xvii. 11.

A mean revenge (*vv.* 9, 10).—I. These Philistines never forgot or forgave the fall of their champion, Goliath. II. They gave vent to their feelings by heaping insults on the dead body of their foe. This has been done in modern times; the dead exhumed and gibbeted. III. The same spirit of mean revenge is manifested by those who will sometimes insult the weak who may bear the name of the strong.

Mutilating the dead (*vv.* 8, 9).—The ancient Greeks treated the dead bodies of their enemies in a manner equally indecent and inhuman. They mangled, dismembered, dragged them about the field of battle, and suffered them to lie unburied for a long time, and even to become the prey of savage beasts and ravenous fowls. No instance of this kind is more remarkable than that of the brave, the generous, but unfortunate Hector, whose dead body suffered every indignity which the infuriated rage of Achilles, or the ferocious brutality of his myrmidons, could invent. Nay, the whole army joined in the brutish and barbarous insult; which shows that it was their constant practice, and regarded as quite consistent with virtue and honour. Tydeus is not

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v. 4. *Sydney Smith, Ss.* ii. 147; *F. Wrangham, Ss.* iii. 419; *J. A. Miller,* The Suicide Saul, 230.

v. 6. *H. Lindsay, Le t.* i. 356.

d R. A. Griffin. "There is no enemy can hurt us but by our own hands. Satan could not hurt us, if our own corruption betrayed us not; afflictions cannot hurt us without our own impatience; temptations cannot hurt us, without our own yieldance; death could not hurt us, without the sting of our own sins; sins could not hurt us without our own impenitence."—*Bp. Hall.*

e R. A. Griffin.

disposal of Saul's body and armour

a Wordsworth.

b Spk. Com.

c "Doubtless the famous temple of Venus in Ascalon mentioned by Herodotus as the most ancient of all her temples."—*Spk. Com.* "This was the great retribution for the fall of their champion of Gath."—*Stanley.* "Three Bakhtiarees had been condemned to death by the prince for robbery; one was beheaded, and the second blown up; the third was cut in half, and the two parts of his body hung on two of the most frequented gates of the city as a warning to other thieves. The

treated with more respect in Statius; and in Virgil, the body of Mezentius is cruelly lacerated, for though he only received two wounds from Æneas, we find his breastplate afterwards pierced through in twelve places. These instances, to which many others might be added, prove that it was the common practice of ancient warriors.[d]

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horrid spectacle was displayed for three days." — *Morier.*

[d] *Paxton.*

11—13. (11) **Jabesh-gilead,** comp. ch. xi. 1—11. (12) **burnt them,** this was not the Heb. custom, but sufficient reasons can be assigned for its being done in this case. The bodies were dismembered and disfigured. They would also be corrupted and offensive; and burning would secure the royal remains fr. possibility of further insult. (13) **bones,** indic. that the burning was imperfectly done. **under a tree,** or *the tamarisk.*[a] Dav. afterwards removed them to Zelah.[b]

the burial of Saul

[a] *Gesenius.*

[b] 2 Sa. xxi. 12—14.

The valiant men of Jabesh-gilead (*v.* 12).—I. These brave men were grateful, note xi. 1—11. They did not forget the old kindness of Saul. II. Their gratitude prompted them to attempt the perilous rescue of the bodies of the slain, and provide for them an honourable burial. III. Good deeds are not always forgotten or unrequited in the present life.

Gratitude.—When Prince Blucher visited this country, in the year 1814, and was giving audience at his apartments at St. James's, three females made their way into his presence, apparently much affected. They were the mother and two sisters of a seaman belonging to an English brig of war, who, with others, had been cast on shore on the coast of Pomerania, during the short war between England and Prussia; and who, being obliged to surrender themselves, fell into the hands of the field-marshal, who not only treated them with all possible kindness, but maintained them at his own expense for several weeks, clothed and supplied them with money, and finally sent them home to their own country. This grateful seaman was with his ship at Portsmouth, and not being at liberty to come to town to thank the gallant veteran himself, had charged his mother and sisters to wait upon him for that purpose. Blucher was highly pleased with this instance of a British sailor's gratitude, and declared that it more than compensated him for every act of humanity in his whole life.[c]

[c] *Percy Anec.*

The fall of Saul.—If Samuel is the great example of an ancient saint growing up from childhood to old age without a sudden conversion, Saul is the first direct example of the mixed character often produced by such a conversion, a call coming in the midway of life to rouse the man to higher thoughts than the lost asses of his father's household, or than the tumults of war and victory. He became "another man," yet not entirely. He was, as is often the case, half-converted, half-roused. His mind moved unequally and disproportionately in its new sphere. Backwards and forwards in the names of his children, we see alternately the signs of the old heathen superstition, and of the new purified religion of Jehovah. Jonathan, his firstborn, is the "gift of Jehovah;" Melchi-shua is "the help of Moloch;" his grandson Merib-baal is "the soldier of Baal;" and his fourth son, Ish-baal, "the man of Baal;"

and here, again, "Baal" is swept out, and appears only as "Bosheth," the "shame or reproach,"—Mephi-bosheth, Ish-bosheth. He caught the prophetic inspiration not continuously but only in fitful gusts. Passionately he would enter into it for a time, as he came within the range of his better associations, tear off his clothes, and lie stretched on the ground under its influence for a night and day together. But then he would be again the slave of his common pursuits. His religion was never blended with his moral nature. It broke out in wild, ungovernable acts of zeal and superstition, and then left him more a prey than ever to his own savage disposition. With the prospects and position of a David, he remained to the end a Jephtha, or a Samson, with this difference, that, having outlived the age of Jephtha and of Samson, he could not be as they; and the struggle, therefore, between what he was and what he might have been grew fiercer as years went on; and the knowledge of Samuel, and the companionship of David, became to him a curse instead of a blessing. Of all the checks on the dangers incident to the growth of an Oriental monarchy in the Jewish nation, the most prominent was that which Providence supplied in the contemporaneous growth of the prophetic office. But it was just this far-reaching vision of the past and the future which Saul was unable to understand. At the very outset of his career, Samuel, the great representative of the prophetical order, had warned him not to enter on his kingly duties till he should appear to inaugurate them and to instruct him in them. It would seem to be almost immediately after his first call that the occasion arose. The war with the Philistines was impending. He could not restrain the vehemence of his religious emotions. As king he had the right to sacrifice. Without a sacrifice it seemed to him impossible to advance to battle. He sacrificed, and by that ritual zeal defied the warning of the prophetic monitor. It was the crisis of his trial. He had shown that he could not understand the distinction between moral and ceremonial duty, on which the greatness of his people depended. It was not because he sacrificed, but because he thought sacrifice greater than obedience that the curse descended upon him.—*Dr. Stanley.*

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

otherwise called

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

Synopsis.

(According to Horne.)

THE Second Book of Samuel contains the history of David, the second king of Israel, during the period of nearly forty years—*i.e.* from A.M. 2948—2988 : and by recording the translation of the kingdom from the tribe of Benjamin to that of Judah, it relates the partial accomplishment of the prediction delivered in Gen. xlix. 10. The victories of David, his wise administration of civil government, his efforts to promote true religion, his grievous sins, and deep repentance, together with the various troubles and judgments inflicted upon him and his people by God, are all fully described. This book consists of three principal divisions, relating the triumphs and troubles of David, and his transactions subsequent to his recovery of the throne, whence he was driven for a short time by the rebellion of his son Absalom.

PART I.—**The triumphs of David** i.—x.

Sect. i. **His elegy over Saul and Jonathan**...i.

Sect. ii. His triumph over the house of Saul ii.—iv.

Sect. iii. His victories over the Jebusites and Philistines .....v.
Bringing the ark to Jerusalem ...vi.
His prayer on that occasion .....vii.

Sect. iv. His other victories .....viii.—x.

PART II.—**The troubles of David, and their cause, with his repentance, and recovery to Divine favour**.....xi.—xix.

Sect. i. The cause of David's troubles,—his first great sin,—His sin in the matter of Uriah, etc. .....xi.—xii.

Sect. ii. His punishments,—domestic troubles .....xiii.
Public troubles .....xiv.—xvii.
The death of Absalom.....xviii.
David's mourning on his account xix.

PART III.—**David's restoration to his throne, and subsequent transactions** .....xx.—xxiv.

Sect. i. David's return to Jerusalem, and Seba's insurrection quelled ...xx.

Sect. ii. Punishment of the sins of Saul...xxi.

Sect. iii. His Psalm of praise .....xxii.

Sect. iv. Last words of David, etc. .....xxiii.

Sect. v. David's second great offence against God, etc. .....xxiv.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

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1—4. (1) **Ziklag,** 1 Sa. xxvii. 6. (2) **clothes,** *etc.*,[a] outward signs of disaster and grief. The man was anxious to ingratiate himself with David, so did everything he thought would please him. (3) **escaped,** at once intimating the defeat. (4) Dav.'s patriotism led him to feel the utmost interest and anxiety in the result of a battle, in wh. he was nearly compelled to take part.

A suggestive contrast (*v.* 1).—I. Saul—defeated, slain, dishonoured. II. David—victorious, triumphant. III. The misery of the God-abandoned: and the happiness of the God-assisted man.—*Ill-news in happy moments* (*vv.* 2—4).—I. No happiness in this world unalloyed. II. Sorrow treads closely on the heels of joy.

Signs of mourning (*v.* 2).—In several passages of Scripture mention is made of dust strewed on the head as a token of mourning, or earth or ropes carried on the head as a token of submission. The following instance is remarkably analogous to these acts of humiliation:—"He then descended the mountain, carrying, as is the custom of the country for vanquished rebels, a stone upon his head, as confessing himself guilty of a capital crime."[b]

5—10. (5) **knowest thou,** if he had fled for his own life, how could he be sure about the king and his sons? (6) This account may be *made up;* or it may be reconciled with that in 1 Sa. xxxi., by supposing the Amalekite came up to Saul before he was quite dead, and gave him the finishing stroke. (7, 8) **Amalekite,** reminding Saul in his death-hour of his sin.[a] (9) **anguish,**[b] *see* marg.; *dizziness,* or *cramp,* or darkness. (10) **crown,** kind of diademed helmet. **bracelet,** in E. a most ancient symbol of royalty.[c]

Judging others by our own standard.—I. The nationality of this messenger. Amalekite: a nation just conquered by David (*v.* 1). II. His motive. Self-preservation. III. His method. He would curry favour with the conqueror. IV. His mistake. He supposed that David would rejoice in the death of his enemy by whatsoever means it might be accomplished. Had no understanding of a man who, even for his own gain, would not rejoice in iniquity.

Marginal reading of v. 9.—"My coat of mail, or my embroidered coat." The marginal reading here probably conveys the true meaning of the Hebrew. Saul, for his personal security, most likely wore a close coat, made of rings or oilets in the nature of a coat of mail. Montfaucon (*Supplement,* Vol. III. p. 397) thus represents a combat between a person on horseback and another on foot. "The horseman, represented on an Etruscan vase, of Cardinal Gualtieri's, is armed in such a singular manner that I thought it necessary to give the figure here. This horseman is mounted on a naked horse with only a bridle, though the horse seems to have something on his neck, which passes between his two ears, but it is impossible to distinguish what it is. The armour also of this horseman is as extraordinary as that of the Sarmatian horseman on Trajan's pillar. His military habit is

news of Saul's death brought to David

a Comp. 1 Sa. iv. 12. See *Saurin, Disc. Hist.* v. 10; *H Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 1.

vv. 2—4. *J. A. Miller, Saul,* 261.

"Trembling lips, tuned to such grief that they say bright words sadly."—*Dobell.*

"Her big swoln grief surpassed the power of utterance."—*Ovid.*

b Bruce.

the false account of Saul's death

a 1 Sa. xv.

b The Heb. word occurs nowhere else.

c "Such as may be seen in the existing regalia of Persia, India, China, and other lands; and such as we recognise in the ancient monuments of Egypt, Persia, and Assyria."—*Kitto.*

"The *crown* was prob. a small metallic cap, or wreath, wh. encircled the temples, serving the purpose of a helmet, with a very small horn projecting in front, as the emblem of power."—*Jamieson.*

Plutarch tells us that Artaxerxes ordered three needles to be thrust through the tongue of a

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very close, and fitted to his body, and covers him even to his wrist and below his ankles, so that his feet remain naked, which is very extraordinary. For, I think, both in the ancient and modern cavalry, the feet were a principal part which they guarded; excepting only the Moorish horse, who have for their whole dress only a short tunic, which reaches to the middle of the thigh; and the Numidians, who ride quite naked upon a naked horse, except a short cloak which they have fastended to their necks, and hanging loose behind them in warm weather, and which they wrap about themselves in cold weather. Our Etruscan horseman here hath his feet naked, but he hath his head well covered, with a cap folded about it and large slips of stuff hanging down from it. He wears a collar of round stones. The close-bodied coat he wears is wrought all over with zigzags and large points down to the girdle, which is broad, and tied round the middle of his body; the same flourishing is continued lower down his habit quite to his ankle, and all over his arms to his wrist." Something similar to this might be the military dress of Saul.[d]

certain soldier who lyingly said that he had killed two of the enemy.

"There is perhaps no time at which we are disposed to think so highly of a friend as when we find him standing higher than we expected in the esteem of others."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

d Burder.

David punishes the self-accused slayer of Saul

11—16. (11) **rent them,** the impulsive act of desperate grief. **all . . him,** in imitation of him. (12) **and for Jonathan,** the *tone* of this mourning is given by Dav.'s personal feeling in the loss of his friend. (13) **stranger,** so not bound by ties of allegiance to Saul: he might indeed fairly rejoice at death of his people's great foe. (14) **Lord's anointed,**[a] so Dav. regarded Saul, but too much to expect the Amal. to think of him thus. (15) **young men,** his personal attendants. (16) **upon thy head,** responsibility must be your own.

a 1 Sa. xxiv. 6, xxvi. 9, 10.

The reward of lying lips (*v.* 16).—I. Here is a lie told in the hope of personal advantags. This Amalekite had not killed Saul (1 Sa. xxxi. 4, 5). II. Here is a man taken at his own word and judged by his own mouth. III. How many brave words of boasting are words of shame.—*The lying Amalekite.*—Proceeding, he told six lies successively. 1. That Saul called him; 2. That he came at his call; 3. That Saul demanded who he was; 4. That he returned an answer; 5. That Saul commanded him to kill him; 6. That he killed him accordingly. For a wilful falsehold told is a cripple not able to stand by itself without another to support it.[b]

v. 12. *Bp. Burnet. The Royal Martyr.*

v. 14. *E. Miller, Ss.* 35.

When Cæsar had Pompey's head presented to him, he wept and said, "I sought not revenge, but victory."

Mourning for the dead (*v.* 12).—Thus did David, and those that were with him, weep and fast until the evening because the "mighty were fallen," and because "the weapons of war" had perished. When a father or mother "falls on the ground," the children have stated periods when they weep and fast in memory of their dead. On the day of the full moon, those who have lost their mothers fast until the sun come to the meridian, and in the evening they take milk and fruit. For a father, the sons fast on the new moon in the same way as for the mother.[c]

v. 15. "He that betrayed Rhodes to the Turk was served in like sort, ending his life with shame and torment. So was Earl Godwin here, and Earl Doring in Bohemia by Duke Reda."—*Trapp.*

b Thomas Fuller.

c Roberts.

David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan

17, 18. (17) **this lamentation,** a dirge or funeral song. Dav.'s poetic soul expressed its joys and griefs in psalm and song. (18) The words—*the use of*—should be omitted, and the words—*The Bow*[a]—be put in capitals, as being the title heading this dirge in the Book of Jasher.[b]

"*a* Comp. titles of some Psalms, *e.g.* 'Hind of the Morning;' 'Mute Dove among

The Song of the Bow (*v.* 18).—The Bow of Jonathan reminds us—I. That the weapons of this world are sometimes employed in

the services of friendship (2 Sa. xx. 35 *ff.*). II. That they are vain when employed without the blessing of God. III. That the bow of truth is the only invincible one whence arrows of conviction are sent to transfix the hearts of the king's enemies.

Funeral customs (*v.* 18).—These words have been generally understood of Jonathan teaching the children of Judah the use of the bow. But a better interpretation of the passage probably is, that the bow is the name of the lamentation which David uttered over Jonathan; and that it is so denominated because he met his death from the bow. The following extract, describing a funeral procession of women, to commemorate the death of a merchant named Mahomet, at Cosire, where he was murdered by two Arabs, who attacked him with swords, will illustrate this representation. Speaking of the murder of Mahomet, Mr. Irwin says: "The tragedy which was lately acted near Cosire gave birth to a mournful procession of females, which passed through the different streets of Ginnah, and uttered dismal cries for the death of Mahomet. In the centre was a female of his family, who carried a naked sword in her hand, to imitate the weapon by which the deceased fell. At sundry places the procession stopped, and danced round the sword to the music of timbrels and tabors. They paused a long time before our house, and some of the women made threatening signs to one of our servants, which agrees with the caution we received to keep within doors. It would be dangerous enough to face this frantic company, whose constant clamour and extravagant gestures gave them all the appearance of the female bacchanals of Thrace recorded of old." From this custom of carrying in the funeral procession the weapon by which the deceased met death, it seems likely that the lamentation of David over Jonathan might have been called the bow, and sung by the men of Judah in funeral procession.[c]

19—20. (19) **the beauty,**[a] or more vigorously, thy glory, O Israel! The king and his son regarded as embodying the excellency of the nation. **high places,** Gilboa. Is. felt usually safe fighting on their own hills. **fallen,** this is the refrain or chorus. (20) **Gath** (1 Sa. xxi. 10), the royal city. **Askelon** (1 Sa. xxxi. 10), the chief seat of worship.

The fall of the mighty (*v.* 19).—**I.** All history illustrates this. **1.** Nations; 2. Men. II. The mighty fall variously. 1. By the force of temptation; 2. In human respect; 3. By death. III. The fall of the mighty is suggestive—1. Of caution to those who are in high places; 2. Of encouragement to the lowly. God will raise them up.

Uncertainty of human affairs (*v.* 19).—Cæsar Borgia (base son to Pope Alexander VI.) used to boast to his friend Machiavel that he had contrived his affairs and greatness into such a posture of firmness that, whether his holy father lived or died, they could not but be secure. If he lived there could be no doubt of them; and if he died, he had laid his interest so as to overrule the next election as he pleased. But all this while the politician never thought or considered that he might in the meantime fall dangerously sick, and that sickness necessitate his removal from the court, and during that his absence his father die, and so his interest decay, and his mortal enemy be chosen to the papacy, as, indeed, it fell out. So that, for all his exact plot, down was he cast from all his greatness, and forced to end his days in a mean condition: as it

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Strangers: 'Lilies,' etc. So this is called *Keseth*, or, *The Bow*."—*Kitto*

b Jos. x. 13.

v. 17. *J. Bullar, Lay Lect.* 297.
vv. 17—26. *Bp. Horsley, Bib. Crit.* ii. 431.
v. 18. *J. Gregory, Wks.* i. 1.
Dr. Good observes that the only other passage where the Book of Jasher is named is in the poetical form (Josh. x. 13), and the root of the word means a "song;" whence he concludes that this was a collection of odes or sacred hymns composed on different occasions, which, being uninspired, have not been preserved.
c Burder

the Song of the Bow

the mighty fallen

a "Lit. 'the *gazelle*, or *antelope* of Israel.' In E. this animal is the chosen type of beauty and symmetrical elegance of form."—*Jamieson.*
"The wild roe."—*Stanley.*
v. 19. *S. Davies, Ss.* iii. 24; *J. C. M. Bellew, Ss.* 129.
vv. 20, 21. *J. A. Möller, Saul*, 286.
When Addison was told that a soldier wept at a moving scene in his *Cato*, he replied, "Be will fight never the worse for that; it is a sign he is a brave man."

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It is customary among the Arabs, after a victory, to make songs and sing them to celebrate the warlike deeds of their chiefs.

b South.

is pity but all such politic opinionators should. Upon much the like account, we find it once said of an eminent cardinal, by reason of his great and apparent likelihood to step into St. Peter's chair, that in two conclaves he went in pope and came out again cardinal. . . For when men have busied themselves, and beat their brains never so much, the whole result, both of their counsels and their fortunes, is still at the mercy of an accident. And, therefore, whosoever that man was that said that he had rather have a grain of fortune than a pound of wisdom, as to the things of this life, spoke nothing but the voice of wisdom and great experience.[b]

the shield of the mighty

21, 22. (21) **no dew,** *etc.*,[a] as if the very ground may well be under a curse on wh. such a calamity came. **fields of offerings,** that would afford firstfruits, poetical fig. for land "fertile and blessed of God."[b] **not anointed with oil,**[c] cast aside amid the blood and dirt, "the polish of the consecrated oil was gone—it was a defiled and polluted thing." (22) This verse indicates that the battle had been severe, and heroic actions done up to the last.

The shield (v. 21).—The shield was more highly valued by the ancients than all their other armour. It was their delight to adorn it with all kinds of figures, of birds and beasts, especially those of generous natures, as eagles and lions: they emblazoned upon its capacious circle the effigies of their gods, the forms of celestial bodies, and all the works of nature. They preserved it with the most jealous care; and to lose it in the day of battle was accounted one of the greatest calamities that could befall them, worse than defeat, or even than death itself; so great was their passion for what is termed military glory, and the estimation in which it was held, that they had a profound regard for all sorts of arms the instruments by which they attained it; and to leave them in the hands of their enemies, to give them for a pledge, or dispose of them in a dishonourable way, was an indelible disgrace both in Greece and at Rome, for which they could hardly ever atone. But these sentiments were not confined to Greece and Rome; among no people were they carried higher than among the Jews. To cast away the shield in the day of battle, they counted a national disgrace, and a fit subject for public mourning. This affecting circumstance was not omitted in the beautiful elegy which David, a brave and experienced soldier, composed on the death of Saul and the loss of his army: "The shield of the mighty was vilely cast away." On that fatal day, when Saul and the flower of Israel perished on the mountains of Gilboa, many of the Jewish soldiers who had behaved with great bravery in former battles, forgetful of their own reputation and their country's honour, threw away their shields, and fled from the field. The sweet singer of Israel adverts to that dishonourable conduct, with admirable and touching pathos: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil." The Apostle has availed himself of this general feeling in his Epistle to the Hebrews, to encourage them in the profession of the Gospel, and in a courageous, firm, and constant adherence to the truth: "Cast not away therefore your confidence." Abide without wavering in the profession of

b Wordsworth.

c Is. xxi. 5.

v. 21. *J. Weemse, Expos.* i. 147.

Niebuhr tells us that an Arab tribe so thoroughly defeated a Pasha of Bagdad, that the Arab poets made a song upon the victory; which became so common as to be heard in Bagdad itself.

"Death is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release, the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, and the comforter of him whom time cannot console."—*Colton.*

the faith, and in the firm belief of the truth; and aim at the full assurance of the grace of faith, which, as a spiritual shield, should be sought with unwearied diligence, and retained with jealous care.[b]

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b Paxton.

23, 24. (23) Prefer form of address, "Saul and Jon. lovely and pleasant were ye!" Dav. throws some of the beauty of the son over the father. **eagles, lions,** noblest of birds and beasts. (24) **in scarlet,**[a] from the spoils of his wars.

Swiftness of foot (*v.* 23).—The military exercises of the Hebrews resembled those of other nations around them. Swiftness of foot was highly valued, as it gave the warrior a great advantage over his slower and more unwieldy antagonist. It is accordingly mentioned to the honour of Asahel, one of David's captains, that he was swifter of foot than a wild roe; and the sweet singer of Israel, in his poetical lamentations over those two great captains, Saul and Jonathan, takes particular notice of this warlike quality: "They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions." Nor were the ancient Greeks less attentive to a qualification which the state of the military art in those days rendered so valuable. The foot-races in the Olympic games were instituted by warlike chieftains, for the very purpose of inuring their subjects to the fatigues of war, and particularly of increasing their speed, which was regarded as an excellent qualification in a warrior, both because it served for a sudden attack and a nimble retreat. Homer, fully aware of its value in ancient warfare, says that swiftness of foot is one of the most excellent endowments with which a man can be favoured. To invigorate the frame, on the strength and firmness of which the victory almost entirely depended in primitive times, the Hebrew captains are said to have exercised their soldiers in lifting great weights. After the defeat of Saul, which seems to have been chiefly effected by the skill and valour of the enemy's archers, David commanded his officers to instruct their troops in the use of the bow, which, though employed by the Hebrew warriors from the earliest times, appears to have been rather neglected till that terrible catastrophe taught them the necessity of forming a body of skilful archers, which might enable them to meet their enemies in the field on equal terms. The Hebrew youth were also taught to hurl the javelin, to handle the spear, and to use the sling, in which many of them greatly excelled.[b]

Saul and Jonathan in life and death

a "This pass. is most exquisite composition. The wom. of Is. are most happily introduced, and the subject of the encomium is admirably adapted to the female characters."—*Bp. Lowth.*

v. 23. *Dr. B. Kennet, Ss.* 294; *S. Carr, Ss.* i. 381.

v. 24. *A. Macdonald, Ss.* 125.

v. 23. "Such fast friends were the *sacra cohors* among the Neians; the *soldurii* among the old French; the sworn brethren among the Irish, etc."—*Trapp.*

"All contentions cease in the grave. Death, like some able daysman, lays his hand on the contending parties, and brings all their differences to an amicable conclusion."—*Hervey.*

b Paxton.

25—27. (25) **Jonathan,** throughout the special subject of the dirge. (26) **very pleasant,** in intercourse of near friendship. Jonathan is a truly lovely and lovable character. (27) **how . . fallen,**[a] the final refrain.

The love that is wonderful (*v.* 26).—The love of Jonathan to David was wonderful in—I. Its condescension. The heir to the throne of Israel loved the shepherd-lad. II. Its depth and intensity. Jonathan loved David "as his own soul." III. Its unselfishness. IV. Its practice. Note how the practicality of Jonathan's love was shown. V. Its constancy. No change in David's circumstances altered the character of his friendship.[b]

The love of women (*v.* 26).—The love of women or as the word is frequently rendered, wives. This figure hath been censured, as not well chosen, and insinuations dropped highly to the dishonour of the two noble friends. But the expression gives no

special lament for Jonathan

a "This recurrence of the same idea is perfectly congenial to the nature of elegy, since grief is fond of dwelling upon the particular objects of the passion, and frequently repeating them."—*Bp. Lowth.*

b The Study.

"The soul of

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countenance to it. It appears to me, that there was somewhat in the conduct of Michal, David's wife, in too hastily consenting to be married to Phalti, that gave occasion to this comparison. It is certain from her behaviour to him, at the bringing the ark to Jerusalem, that she had not that high esteem and affection for him that she ought to have had, as she took this opportunity so bitterly to reproach him. It is certain also, that her marriage to Phalti must have been preceded by a divorce from David; otherwise her second marriage would have been real adultery: and her consenting to a divorce, though by her father's order, showed great want of affection and fidelity to David. On this supposition, no comparison could be better chosen, nor more tenderly and delicately expressed. The brother's love to him, as a friend, was more generous and constant than the sister's, though a wife. The compliment to Jonathan was very high, and just; and the concealing the sister's name, was truly polite.[b]

"woman lives in love." — *Sigourney.*

"There is in the heart of woman such a deep well of love, that no age can freeze it."—*Lytton.*

c Chandler.

"Falsehood and cowardice are things women highly hold in hate."—*Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

David anointed king of Judah

1—4. (1) enquired, *etc.*, characteristic of Dav. is this constant seeking of counsel and direction from God.[a] The death of the king and his son altered Dav.'s position, and made action necessary. **Hebron,**[b] Ge. xxiii. 2. (2) **two wives,** 1 Sa. xxv. 42, 43. (3) **cities,** neighbouring villages and towns. (4) **they anointed,** the will of the people thus acknowledging the call of God.[c]

David anointed king of Judah (*v.* 4).—I. What a power is there arrayed against every humble disciple of the Saviour, Ep. vi. 12. II. David's deliverances and escapes were numerous, and none of them effected in any mode which could diminish the estimation of danger. III. It was to Providence that David owed his several deliverances from the animosity and power of Saul. IV. At last the sorrows of the wanderer, the persecuted fugitive, are over, and he is crowned—the ruler of the mightiest tribe in Israel.[d]

Worldly preferments.—And then for the preferments of the world, he that would reckon up all the accidents that they depended upon, may as well undertake to count the sands or to sum up infinity; so that greatness, as well as an estate, may, upon this account, be properly called a man's fortune, forasmuch as no man can state either the acquisition or preservation of it upon any certain rules—every man, as well as the merchant, being here truly an adventurer. For the ways by which it is obtained are various, and frequently contrary: one man, by sneaking and flattering, comes to riches and honour (where it is in the power of fools to bestow them), upon observation whereof, another presently thinks to arrive to the same greatness by the very same means, but striving like the ass, to court his master, just as the spaniel had done before him, instead of being stroked and made much of, he is only rated off and cudgelled for all his courtship.[d]

b "Selected, doubtless, as the ancient sacred city of the tribe of Judah, the burial-place of the patriarchs, and the inheritance of Caleb."—*Stanley.*

"The strongest and most important place within the limits of the tribe of Judah."—*Kitto.*

c 1 Sa. xvi. 13. See *Saurin, Disc. Hist.* v. 45.

v. 4. *H. Lindsay, Let.* ii. 16.

d C. M. Fleury, A M.

v. 3. "Thus doth our heavenly leader, whom Dav. prefigured, take us to reign with Him, who have suffered with Him." — *Trapp.*

d South.

Abner makes Ish-bosheth

5—11. (5) David's first royal proclamation. The east of Jordan favouring the house of Saul, Dav. tries to secure their allegiance.[a] (6) **requite you,** or show my confidence and

thanks, by sending this message of peace to you. (7) **valiant,** sons of valour, with idea of *virtue*, right-thinking men. (8) **Abner,** 1 Sa. xiv. 50. **Ish-bosheth** (or *Esh-baal*),[b] man of shame, or bashful. A person of little energy of character. **Mahanaim,** Ge. xxxii. 2. (9) Names here prob. indicate the territory recovered by Abner fr. the Phil. **Ashurites,** or tribe of Asher. (10) **two years,** comp. *v.* 11. (11) **seven .. months,** either Dav. reigned 5½ years before Abner put up Ishbosheth; or 5½ yrs. after Ishb.'s death.

Burial of strangers (*v.* 5).—The bodies of Saul and his sons were burnt by the men of Jabesh-gilead. Two of the thirty-two charities of the Hindoos are, to burn the bodies of those whose relations cannot do it, and to pay for the beating of the tom-toms to the place of burning. It is therefore considered a work of great merit to perform the funeral rites for a respectable stranger, or for those whose relations are not able to meet the expenses. Hence may be seen the funerals of those who have lived in poverty, or who have seen better days, conducted with great pomp, because the reward is great to him who advances the money, and because he receives great praise from the people.[c]

12—17. (12) **went out,**[a] assuming the offensive against Judah. **Gibeon,** now *El-Jeb*, 7 miles W. of Jerusalem; close upon the frontier of Judah. (13) **Joab,** introduced to us here. **pool of Gibeon,**[b] Jer xli. 12. (14) **play,**[c] exhibit their skill in fighting. A sort of champion fight before a general engagement. (15) A fixed arrangement to take twelve a side. (16) The Benjamites tried to take advantage of their skill in using the *left* hand; but the men of Judah proved quite a match for them in quickness and dexterity. **Helkath-hazzurim,** "the field of the malignant."[d] (17) **battle,** general engagement.

Asahel overtaken by death (*vv.* 18—23).—I. Death often comes upon us by ways that we least suspect. Who would fear the hand of a flying enemy, or the butt-end of a spear? II. How often we are betrayed by the accomplishments we are proud of. Asahel's swiftness, which he presumed so much upon, did him no kindness, but forwarded his fate; and with it he ran upon his death, instead of running from it.[e]

Seizing by the beard (*v.* 16).—They did this by the hair of the head, or beard (2 Sa. xx. 9). Plutarch tells us, in his *Apophthegms*, that all things being prepared for a battle, Alexander's captains asked him whether he had anything else to command them. "Nothing," said he, "but that the Macedonians shave their beards." Parmenion wondering what he meant, "Do not you know," says he, "that there is no better hold in fight than the beard?" On arriving near the village, I stopped to copy an inscription, sending my attendants forward to procure lodgings and provisions. My attention, however, was soon attracted by the screams of women and children; and, on entering the village, I found the people throwing sticks and stones at my servants, while the papas was encouraging the assailants. At length, Logotheti's man, on receiving a wound from a large stone, took the priest by the beard, and drawing his sword, would probably have endangered the lives of all our party by some rash action, had I not arrived at that moment, and by holding the hand of the Libadiote, put an end to the fray.[f]

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king of Israel

a "Prob. Dav.'s informants thought he would resent the act of the men of Jabesh." — *Spk. Com.*

b 1 Chr. viii. 33, ix. 39.

v. 7. *Pp. Fleetwood, Ss.* 576.

c Roberts.

"Death is the foreshadowing of life. We die that we may die no more."—*Hooker.*

Joab goes out to confer with Abner

a Comp. 1 Sa. xviii. 30; 2 Sa. xxi. 17; 1 Chr. xx. 1.

b "On the east of the hill is a copious spring, wh. issues in a cave excavated in a limestone rock, so as to form a large reservoir. In the trees further down are the remains of a pool or tank of considerable size. This is doubtless the pool of Gibeon."—*Smith's Dict. Bib.*

c "Some think the proposal was only for an exhibition of a little tilting match for diversion. Others suppose that both parties being reluctant to commence a civil war, Abner proposed to leave the contest to the decision of 12 picked men on either side."—*Jamieson.*

d Ewald.

e M. Henry.

f Doduell's Tour.

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defeat and pursuit of Abner

18—24. (18) **Asahel,**[a] remarkable for powers of running. "The darling of his brothers." (19) **pursued . . Abner,** bec. the grandest trophy of a battle was the armour of the general. (20) **behind him,** as he ran. (21) **his armour,**[b] "be content with the spoil of some inferior soldier; you are but a stripling, beware of contending with so tried a warrior as I am." (22) **again,** urging him a second time. **to Joab,** on whom would fall the duty of *blood revenge*. (23) **hinder end,**[c] blunt end; but the strength of Abner's hand, and the swiftness of Asahel's running, made it a death-wound. (24) These names not identified.

Roe and antelope (*v.* 18).—In our version, the original term is translated roe and roebuck; but Dr. Shaw and others have proved by several conclusive arguments that it is not the roe, but the antelope, which the sacred writers intend. The former is extremely rare in the Oriental regions, while the latter is common in every part of the Levant. . . The natives of Syria make a distinction between the antelopes of the mountain and those of the plain. Dr. Russel, who gives us this information, says, "the former is the most beautifully formed; its back and sides are of a dark brown colour, and it bounds with surprising agility; the latter is of a much lighter colour, its limbs are not so cleanly turned, and it is neither so strong nor so active; both, however, are so fleet that the greyhounds, though reckoned excellent, cannot, without the aid of the falcon, come up with them, except in soft, deep ground." This is probably the reason that the sacred writers frequently mention the "antelope upon the mountains," and not simply the antelope, when they allude to surpassing beauty of form, or amazing rapidity of motion. The swiftness of this beautiful creature has been celebrated by writers of every age, in terms of high admiration. Its exquisite symmetry, its active form, and the delicate turn of its limbs, clearly show that it is intended by its Maker to hold a distinguished place among the fleetest animals that scour the desert. Sir John Malcolm says it may be termed the fleetest of quadrupeds. It seems rather to vanish than to run from the pursuer; and when closely pressed, bounds with so great agility, that it hardly seems to touch the ground in its career. Oppian calls it the swiftest species of goat; and, according to Ælian, it equals the whirlwind in speed. He outruns the antelope, said the Arabians, when they wished to pay the highest compliment to the youthful warrior. To this trait in its character the sacred writers often allude. The surprising agility which Asahel, the brother of Joab, displayed in his pursuit of Abner, drew this eulogium from the sacred historian: "And Asahel was light of foot, as one of the antelopes that are in the field." Another allusion to the amazing speed of that animal occurs in the description of the warlike qualifications which distinguished a troop of Gadites in the service of David: "They were men of might, men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes (the antelopes) upon the mountains."[d]

25—28. (25) **children,** *etc.*, prob. a reinforcement enabled Abner to make a stand. (26) "Abner, who had made a jest of shedding blood, now professes repugnance for bloodshed."[a] (27) A diff. expression may mean either, If you had not made the

a 1 Ch. ii. 16, xii. 8; Ps. xviii. 33; Song ii. 17, viii. 14.

b Ju. xiv. 19.

c iii. 27, iv. 6, xx. 10.

"God hath made goodness a noble and a stately thing; hath impressed on it that beauty and majesty which command a universal love and veneration, which strike presently both a kindly and an awful respect into the minds of all men. Power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired; but only goodness is truly esteemed and honoured." —*Barrow.*

"Excess of grief for the deceased is madness; for it is an injury to the living, and the dead know it not."—*Xenophon.*

"First must give place to last, because last must have his time to come; but last gives place to nothing, for there is not another to succeed."—*Bunyan.*

d *Paxton.*

armistice between Joab and Abner

a *Wordsworth.*

challenge there would have been no war, or, Without your speaking, I should have stopped the pursuit. **in the morning,** or from the morning. (28) **a trumpet,** the call for staying pursuit.

Bitterness (*v.* 26).—These words remind us of—I. A dreadful future state. In what will its bitterness consist? 1. The consciousness it was our own doing. No man is ruined eternally but by reason of his own perversity; 2. The memory of our doings. Hell means the place where we are cloistered with self; 3. The impossibility of doing aught to alleviate our condition. "For ever," is the refrain of the groans of the lost. II. The dreadful present state, or how a future so terrible is ensured. The sinner takes the opiates of the devil. We will name a few:—1. Business of life; 2. Pleasures of life; 3. Sophistries.[b]

Ambition.—It is said of Napoleon Bonaparte, that at that period of his life when the consequences of his infatuated conduct had fully developed themselves in unforeseen reverses, being driven to the necessity of defending himself within his own kingdom, with the shattered remnant of his army, he had taken up a position at Brienne, the very spot where he had received the rudiments of his education; when, unexpectedly, and while he was anxiously employed in a practical application of those military principles which first exercised the energies of his young mind in the college of Brienne, his attention was arrested by the sound of the church clock. The pomp of his imperial court, and even the glories of Marengo and of Austerlitz, faded for a moment from his regard, and almost from his recollection. Fixed for a while to the spot on which he stood, in motionless attention to the well-known sound, he at length gave utterance to his feelings, and condemned the tenor of all his subsequent life by confessing that the hours then brought back to his recollection were happier than any he had experienced throughout the whole course of his tempestuous career.

29—32. (29) **the plain,** arable, or valley of the Jordan. **all Bithron,**[a] or the gorge, or ravine, bet. the Jabbok and Mahanaim.[b] (29) **gathered,** *etc.*, to count up his loss.[c] (31) **died,** so the wounded are not reckoned in. (32) **father,** his name unknown. **went all night,** as Heb. was some 22 miles fr. the field of battle, this was a very heavy night's work; but we should remem. soldiers are accustomed to forced marches.

Retreat from Moscow.—"The French soldiers," says an eye-witness, "on their retreat from Moscow, would, on halting at night, throng into the houses, throw themselves down on the first dirty straw they could find, and there perish in large numbers, with hunger and fatigue. From such sufferings, and from the infection of the air, in the warmer season, by putrefied carcases of men and horses that strewed the road, there sprang two dreadful diseases, the dysentery and typhus fever, before which they melted away like dew before the sun. At times they were so overwhelmed with whirlwinds of snow, that they could not distinguish the road from the ditches, and often found their grave in the latter. The roads, league after league, were checkered with dead bodies covered with snow, and forming undulations, or hillocks, like those in a graveyard. Many of the survivors scarce retained the human form. Some had lost their hearing, others their speech; and many, by excessive cold and hunger,

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v. 26. *J. Whitefield, B.A., A Ser.* (1763)

"Advice is offensive, not because it lays us open to unexpected regret, or convicts us of any fault which has escaped our notice, but because it shows us that we are known to others as well as ourselves; and the officious monitor is persecuted with hatred not because his accusation is false but because he assumes the superiority which we are not willing to grant him, and has dared to detect what we desire to conceal."—*Johnson.*

b R. A. Griffin.

"Who overcomes by force, hath overcome but half his foe"—*Milton.*

burial of Asahel

Joab returns to Hebron

a "From Heb. *bathar*, to cut."—*Gesenius.*

b v. 8.

c Illus. Miss Thompson's picture, "The Roll Call."

"Oh, world! oh, men! what are ye, and our best designs, that we must work by crime to punish crime? And slay, as if death had but this one gate, when a few years would make the sword superfluous?"—*Byron.*

were reduced to a state of such stupid frenzy that they roasted the dead bodies of their companions, and even gnawed their own hands and arms."

B.C. 1053.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

David's increase and children

1—5. (1) **war,** civil war; no doubt helping to prepare for division of the kingdom in the time of Rehoboam. (2) **Amnon,** ch. xiii. (3) **Chileab,**[a] *his father's picture.* **Geshur,**[b] a region in Syria, north of Israel. This marriage was a political one, to strengthen Dav. by a northern alliance. (5) **Eglah,** supposed to be another name for Michal; but *see vv.* 13—16.

Conflict and progress (*v.* 1).—I. David's regal state; crowned, and first act—praises men of Jabesh-gilead (ch. ii). II. David's domestic life. III. David's elevation not dependent on Abner's treaty. IV. David's justice in executing the murderers of Ish-bosheth. This act closes the period comprehended in this discourse. The text sets forth a sad history:—(1) There was war: the Christian life a warfare; (2) There was a long war: the Christian life a war to its close; (3) Meanwhile David waxed stronger and stronger: so should it be with us; (4) The house of Saul grew weaker: so will it be with our foes.[c]

Conflict between nature and grace (*v.* 1).—A gracious heart that is weary of sin will certainly and habitually fall a-striving against it. Contraries are naturally expulsive each of the other. Such twins as a Jacob and an Esau, such a pair as Isaac and Ishmael, cannot live quietly together in the same womb; no, not live quietly together in the same house; but there will be a mutual prosecuting and persecuting each of the other. Fire and water may as well agree in the same vessel as grace and sin in the same heart. Blessed be God, in all His children, "the house of David will wax stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul will grow weaker and weaker."[d]

6—11. (6) **made himself strong,** adopted plans to secure the objects of his personal ambition. There were others more nearly connected with David, so he could not hope to be prime minister, and first general of Dav. (7) **a concubine,** secondary, or inferior wife, *see* Ge. xvi., xxii. 24, xxx. **Aiah,** is an Edomitish name; as a foreigner, she could not prop. be a full wife. **wherefore,** *etc.*,[a] we do not know whether the accusation was true or false. (8) **a dog's head,** comp. 1 Sa. xvii. 43; 2 Ki. viii. 13. (9) **so do God,** Ru. i. 17. (10) **to translate,** pass over. (11) **feared him,**[b] Ishbosheth not a strong-minded man.

How to defeat calumny.—I. Despise it: to seem disturbed at it is the way to make it believed; and stabbing your defamer will not prove you innocent. II. Live an exemplary life: and then your general good character will overpower it. III. Speak tenderly of every one, even of your defamer; and by so doing you will show the world that you are innocent.

Improvement of calumny.—"If any one speaks ill of thee," said Epictetus, "consider whether he hath truth on his side; and, if so, reform thyself, that his censures may not affect thee. When Anaximander was told that the very boys laughed at his singing, "Ah!" said he, "then I must learn to sing better." Plato, being told that he had many enemies who spoke ill of

David's increase and children

a 1 Chr. iii. 1, called Daniel.

b De. iii. 11.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*, "Abner and Joab."

c C. M. Fleury, A.M.

"Grace and glory are one and the same thing, in a different print, in a smaller and greater letter. Glory lies couched and compacted in grace, as the beauty of a flower lies couched and eclipsed in the seed."—*Hopkins.*

d T. Brookes.

Ish-bosheth quarrels with Abner

a "In the E., the wives and concubines of a king are the property of his successor to this extent, that for a private person to aspire to marry one of them would be considered a virtual advance of pretensions to the crown."—*Jamieson.*

b "It is prob. that Abner before this had begun to incline towards David."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 9, 10. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 30.

him, said, "It is no matter; I shall live so that none will believe them." Hearing, at another time, that an intimate friend of his had spoken detractingly of him, he said, "I am sure he would not do it if he had not some reason for it."

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12—16. (12) **on his behalf,** to win Dav.'s favour toward him. **whose,** *etc.*, acknowledging that none had right superior to Dav. (13) **bring Michal,** no doubt Dav. was attached to her as his first wife, but he makes this demand now for *political* reasons—to have Saul's daughter would incline adherents of that house to join him. (14) **espoused,** *etc.* (1 Sa. xviii. 25, 27). (15) **Phaltiel,** or *Phalti* (1 Sa. xxv. 44). (16) **Bahurim**[a] (2 Sa. xvi. 5).

David's demand for Michal (*v.* 13).—I think David was most certainly in the right to demand her; for whatever may be said as to his other wives, he had certainly the strongest claim to this, for he had purchased her for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. And supposing there was nothing of a sensual disposition that influenced David in this instance, there might be other very substantial reasons to induce him to insist upon her being sent to him. He purchased her at the hazard of his life, and she was a living proof of his military valour and ability. She was his predecessor's daughter, and he did not probably choose to lose the honour and advantage of the alliance. It might conciliate some of Saul's family and tribe to his interest, when they saw one of his daughters owned and treated as David's wife, and that he did not pursue his resentment to Saul, to the injury or disgrace of any of the branches of his family. There was also a real generosity in the thing, both to her and Saul, in that he received her after she had been another man's; remembering probably how once he owed his life to her affection, and knowing that she was partly separated from him by her father's authority: whereas many princes, for much less provocations of a wife's father, would have turned off their consorts in revenge of them, and even put them to death for having been married to another. In consequence of this demand made to Abner and Ishbosheth, she was immediately put into Abner's hands; who, to prepare things for an accommodation with David, went and assembled all the elders of Israel, and said to them: "You have formerly oftentimes expressed your desire that David might be king over you. You have now an opportunity to gratify your own inclinations in this respect; and what should engage you to advance him to the throne is, that God Himself hath pointed out to you the man, as He hath declared, 'By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines and out of the hand of all their enemies.'" Intimating hereby the incapacity of Ishbosheth, and that it was both their interest and duty to transfer the kingdom and government to David; would be happy for themselves, and an instance of obedience to their God. He went also and applied himself particularly to the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul's family belonged, and persuaded them, by the same kind of arguments, to fall in with the general sense of all the other tribes, and concur with them in advancing David to the throne.[b]

Abner makes a league with David

[a] "A village apparently belonging to Benj., not far from Jerus., on one of the roads leading to the Jordan." —*Ayre.*

See 2 Sa. xvii. 17—21, xxiii. 31; 1 Chr. xi. 33.

"As for my wife, I would you had her spirit in such another; the third of the world is yours; which with a snaffle you may pace easy, but not such a wife." —*Shakespeare.*

"Women are formed for attachment. Their gratitude is unimpeachable. Their love is an unceasing fountain of delight to the man who has once attained it, and knows how to deserve it. But that very keenness of sensibility which, if well cultivated, would prove the source of your highest enjoyment, may grow to bitterness and wormwood if you fail to attend to it, or abuse it."—*Hogg.*

"She's outwardly all that bewitches sense, all that entices; nor is it in our virtue to uncharm it."—*Beaumont.*

[b] *Chandler.*

17—21. (17) **had,** previous to his application to Dav.[a] **ye sought for,** only Abner's influence had prevented the union

Abner seeks to bring

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Israel over to David

a "The narrative here is parallel, not subsequent to, the preceding, as is very usual in Heb. history." — *Spk. Com.*

b "He was honourably received by Dav., and discussed with him the conditions under which the union of the whole kingdom was to be effected. Though we are not informed what was to become of Ishbosheth, no doubt his honourable retirement was stipulated for."— *Ewald.*

c Chandler.

Joab slays Abner

a Josephus.

b "Joab ought not to have acted as *goel*, seeing Asahel was killed in open warfare. It was convenient to put out of the way a rival such as Abner would be sure to prove." — *Wordsworth.*

"He has a heart as false as seas in calms, smiles first to tempt, then ruins with its storms."— *Behn.*

David repudiates the death of Abner

a "We must remem. that under the O. T. temporal rewards, or disabilities directly attended upon virtue and vice.

1 Ki. ii. 32, 33.

of the nation under Dav. (18) **the Lord**, *etc.*, the highest argument poss. was that, in deciding for Dav., they would be following the Divine lead. **out . . enemies**, who were still afflicting the land. (19) **Benjamin**, as the tribe directly interested in the dynasty of Saul. (20) **twenty men**,[b] as official attendants: possibly escorting Michal. (21) **in peace**, treated as a friend.

David and Abner.—In this whole affair David's conduct, to me, seems perfectly honourable. He received a rebel general to his favour upon his submission, agreed with him that he should bring in all the tribes to do what they desired to do, and were bound by the order of God to do, even to make him king over them, that hereby he might have the peaceable possession of the whole kingdom. Abner had openly told Ishbosheth of his design. Abner sent messengers to David, and not David to Abner, on the affair. It was Abner who conferred with the princes of Israel, and came openly to David at Hebron to agree upon proper measures. David carried on no secret intrigues to bring over Abner and the eleven tribes to his party. He only consented to a just proposal that was made him of recovering his own right, without invading the real right of a single person; and indeed it was the only method he could take, and he would not have acted like a saint or a wise and just prince had he not hereby put an end to the civil war, secured his own rights, and restored and established the peace and prosperity of his people.[c]

22—27. (22) **sent him away**, to avoid Joab, who regarded himself as the *goel*, or avenger of the blood of Asahel. (23) **they told**, *i.e.* people about the court. (24) **what . . done?** a question indic. the authority Joab was assuming. (25) Abner's was a wily, crafty character, and the statesmanlike judgment of Joab saw the danger of this interview. (26) **well of Sirah**, 20 furlongs fr. Hebron.[a] (27) **gate**, the shadow of the gate, as if for privacy.[b] **fifth rib**, the lowest, as ii. 23.

The character and fate of Joab.—Joab was a murderer and a vile traitor. He had heartlessly slain two men who were more righteous and better than himself (2 Sa. iii. 27, xx. 9, 10), and had entered into a conspiracy with Adonijah to set up a throne against Solomon (1 Ki. 1—5). This last act convinced David there would be no peace to the throne of Solomon while Joab lived. Policy on the one hand, and timidity on the other, had prevented David from executing judgment upon him. Thereby he had brought bloodguiltiness upon his family and kingdom, which could only be removed by the offender forfeiting his own life. To this end Solomon caused Joab to be slain (1 Ki. ii. 28—34).

28—30. (28) **guiltless**, he refused altogether to accept the responsibility of Joab's act. It must be regarded as wholly a *private feud.* (29) **not fail**, *etc.*, some kind of bodily infirmity marring the family.[a] **on a staff**, or crutch. (30) **and Abishai**, he prob. agreed and shared by subsequent approval of Joab's act.

A noble revenge.—In the time of the Caliphs, when Abdallah, the shedder of blood, had murdered every descendant of Ommich within his reach, one of that family, named Ibrahim, the son of Soliman, had the good fortune to escape and reach Koufa, which

he entered in disguise. Knowing no person in whom he could confide, he seated himself under the portico of a large house. Soon after the master of the house arriving, followed by several servants, alighted from his horse, entered, and, seeing the stranger, asked him who he was. "I am an unfortunate man," answered Ibrahim, "and request from thee an asylum." "God protect thee!" replied the host, "enter, and remain in peace." Ibrahim lived several months in this house without being questioned by his host. But astonished to see him every day go out on horseback, and return at a certain hour, he ventured one day to inquire the reason. "I have been informed," said his host, "that a person named Ibrahim, the son of Soliman, is concealed in this town: he slayed my father, and I am searching for him in order to be revenged." "Then I know," said Ibrahim, "that God has purposely conducted me to this place: I adore His decree, and resign myself to death. God has determined to avenge the offended man: thy victim is at thy feet." The host, astonished, replied, "O stranger, I see thy misfortunes have made thee weary of life: thou seekest to lose it. but my hand cannot commit such crimes." "I don't deceive thee," said Ibrahim; and he proceeded to explain the occasion on which the affair happened and all the circumstances attending it. A violent trembling then seized the worthy host; his teeth chattered as if from intense cold; his eyes alternately sparkled with fury and overflowed with tears. At length, turning to Ibrahim, "To-morrow," said he, "destiny may join thee to my father, and God will have retaliated. But as for me, how can I violate the asylum of my house? Wretched stranger! fly from my presence! There, take these hundred sequins; begone quickly, and let me never behold thee more!"[b]

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"Revenge, that thirsty dropsy of our souls, makes us covet that which hurts us most." — *Massinger.*

"Revenge is the inflicting of pain upon the person who has injured or offended us, further than the just ends of punishment or reparation require." — *Paley.*

We know many times Christ Himself took no notice of a great deal of evil that was said against Him, so that the rulers wondered, "How is it that they lay these things to your charge, and you answer nothing?"

b Percy Anec.

31—35. (31) **to Joab,** so make a public humiliation for his crime. Dav. ordered a public funeral. and mourning, as if Abner had been one of his own officers. **bier,** partly resembling a coffin, and partly a handbarrow; a sort of wooden frame. (32) **Hebron,** not in his native place,[a] but in Dav.'s own royal city. (33) **lamented,** or composed a funeral dirge. (34) **not bound,** yet he could not defend himself. **before wicked men,** *i.e.* by assassination. (35) Fasting was a customary part of mourning.[b]

David mourns for Abner

a Gibeon, or Zelzah; 1 Ch. ix. 35, viii. 29, 33.

b 2 Sa. i. 12, xii. 17; Ez. xxiv. 17.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 13. "The word here translated the bier is in the original the bed; on these, persons of quality used to be carried forth to their graves, as common people were upon a bier. Kings were sometimes carried out upon beds very richly adorned; as Josephus tells us that Herod was; he says the bed was all gilded, set with precious stones, and that it had a purple

The death of Abner (*vv.* 31—34).—Observe—I. That there is no crime so atrocious, but a person, under the influence of a vindictive spirit, will commit it. II. That the crimes of individuals will be imputed to us as national, if they be not nationally reprobated and deplored. III. That whatever obstructions arise, God's purposes shall surely be accomplished. IV. That however men may escape punishment in this world, their sins shall be recompensed in the world to come.[c]

Sackcloth (*v.* 31).—Sacks are usually made of hair in the East; whence we may understand that where sackcloth is mentioned, haircloth is intended. Hence the idea is different from that which we, whose sacks are not of the same material, would affix to the term. That this is correct, seems to be confirmed by the fact that the use of haircloth, as a penitential dress, was retained by the early Oriental monks, hermits, and pilgrims, and was adopted by the Roman Church, which still retains it for the same purposes. Haircloth was, moreover, called "sackcloth" by

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cover curiously wrought." — *Patrick.*

"There is a tear for all that die; a mourner o'er the humblest grave."—*Byron.*

d Kitto.

a prince and great man fallen in Israel

a See marg.

b See marg.

c xix. 7, 13; 1 K. ii. 5, 6, 33, 34; Ps. xxviii. 4, lxii. 12; 2 Ti. iv. 14.

v.38. *Bourdaloue, S.* ii. 428; *C. J. B. Chapelain,* vi. 479; *T. Whitaker,* 189; *N. Hill,* 437; *H. W. Sullivan,* ii. 204.

vv. 38, 39. *Dr. R. Harris,* Wks. 231.

d R. W. Bush, M. A., on the death of the Pr. Consort.

"He's a king, a true, right king, that dare do aught save wrong; fears nothing mortal but to be unjust; who is not blown up with the flattering puffs of spongy sycophants; who stands unmoved despite the jostlinr of opinion." —*Marston.*

"Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours, makes the night morning, and the noontide night."—*Shakespeare.*

e Massinger.

the early Greek and Latin fathers, and this seems conclusive. Perhaps, in a general sense, the word means any kind of very coarse cloth, but, undoubtedly, more particularly cloth of hair than any other. There is a reference on this practice of assuming a mortifying dress, as an expression of grief or repentance, in Ex. xxxiii. 4. The principle is so obvious, that there are few nations among which, in mournings for the dead, some kind of mortifying habit has not been adopted. We do not know that sackcloth is now much used for this purpose in the East; but ornaments are relinquished, the usual dress is neglected, or it is laid aside and one coarse or old assumed in its place.[d]

36—39. (36) **pleased them,**[a] such genuine expressions of honour and regret paid to a public enemy. And esp. bec. it assured them that Dav. had not plotted Abner's death. (37) **of the king,** of his counsel. (38) **his servants,** the close attendants of his throne. (39) **weak,**[b] Dav. felt he had not things thoroughly under his own control. Dav. never succeeded in shaking off the influence of these sons of Zeruiah.[c]

Departed greatness (*v.* 38).—I. Some of the lessons that may be gleaned from the life just passed away. (1) How much good can be accomplished with duty as a guiding star; (2) The benefit of clothing domestic life with spotless sanctity; (3) The patriotism that swayed his life and conduct; (4) The value of the cultivation of the mind and of the higher faculties of our nature. II. Practical and solemn lessons:—(1) The startling instability of everything human; (2) We should be humble before God; (3) We should sit loose to all human supports and stays; (4) Are we prepared to die?[d]

Obsequious flattery of kings.—

"Wherefore pay you
This adoration to a sinful creature?
I'm flesh and blood, as you are; sensible
Of heat and cold; as much a slave unto
The tyranny of my passions, as the meanest
Of my poor subjects. The proud attributes
By oil'd-tongue flattery imposed upon us
As sacred, glorious, high, invincible,
The deputy of heaven, and in that
Omnipotent: with all false titles else,
Coin'd to abuse our frailty, though compounded,
And by the breath of sycophants applied,
Cure not the least fit of an ague in us.
We may give poor men riches; confer honours
On undeservers; raise or ruin such
As are beneath us; and with this puff'd-up
Ambition would persuade us to forget
That we are men: but He that sits above us,
And to whom, at our utmost rate, we are
But pageant properties, derides our weakness:
In me, to whom you kneel, 'tis most apparent;
Can I call back yesterday, with all their aids
That bow unto my sceptre? or restore
My mind to that tranquillity and peace
It then enjoy'd?"[e]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

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1—4. (1) **Saul's son,** Ishbosheth. **feeble,** the one strong man who supported his trembling kingdom was gone. (2) **Beeroth,** now *Birch,* on the western frontier of tribe of Benj.[a] (3) **Beerothites,** original Canaanite inhabitants. **Gittaim,** Ne. xi. 33; poss. the same as *Gath.* (4) **Mephibosheth,**[b] *extermination of idols;* called *Merib-baal,* 1 Chr. viii. 34. His lameness, according to E. notions, unfitted him for sovereignty.

The regicides (*v.* 2); *their names and pedigree.*—This is added to show us that these two regicides were not only officers in the king's army, but of the same tribe with Saul, and therefore had more ties than one upon them to be honest and faithful to his family. For there is reason to believe that Saul, who lived in the borders of Benjamin, conferred more favours upon that tribe than any other, and might therefore justly expect, both to him and his, a greater esteem and fidelity from those of his own tribe than from others. This patronymic is, therefore, very properly prefixed to the names of Rechab and Baanah, to show what vile, ungrateful villains they were, and how justly they deserved the severe and exemplary punishment which David inflicted on them.[c]

5—8. (5) **house,** *etc.,* at Mahanaim. **lay . . noon,** in E., quite usual to rest during heat of the day. (6) **fetched wheat,**[a] the portions allotted to their soldiers, *v.* 2. (7) **bed,** or divan. **beheaded him,** to take the proof of his death to David. **plain,** valley of Jordan, ch. ii. 29. (8) **which,** refers to Saul. These assassins expected praise and reward.

Soldiers' rations in the East (*v.* 6).—It is still a custom in the East, according to Dr. Perry, to allow their soldiers a certain quantity of corn, with other articles of provisions, together with some pay: and as it was the custom also to carry their corn to the mill at break of day, these two captains very naturally went to the palace the day before to fetch wheat, in order to distribute it to the soldiers, that it might be sent to the mill at the accustomed hour in the morning. The princes of the East, in those days, as the history of David shows, lounged in their divan, or reposed on their couch, till the cool of the evening began to advance. Rechab and Baanah, therefore, came in the heat of the day, when they knew that Ishbosheth, their master, would be resting on his bed; and as it was necessary, for the reason just given, to have the corn the day before it was needed, their coming at that time, though it might be a little earlier than usual, created no suspicion, and attracted no notice.[b]

9—12. (9) **redeemed,**[a] delivered; brought safely through. (10) **Saul is dead,** ch. i. 15. (11) **righteous,** *i.e.* one who was under no sentence of execution, nor had wronged his murderers. (12) **hands,** with wh. they had shed blood. **feet,** with wh. they had escaped with their tidings.[b]

Mutilating the dead (*v.* 12).—In times of tumult and disorder they frequently cut off the hands and feet of people, and afterwards expose them, as well as the head. Lady M. W. Montagu, speaking of the Turkish ministers of state, says: "If a minister only a punish-

Mephibosheth

a Jos. ix. 17, xviii. 25.

b Comp. Ch. ix., xvi., xix. 25, etc. "Fear guides more to their duty than gratitude. For one man who is virtuous from the love of virtue, from the obligation which he thinks he lies under to the Giver of all, there are ten thousand who are good only from their apprehension of punishment."—*Goldsmith.*

c Stackhouse.

assassination of Ish-bosheth

a LXX. add, "And behold the (female) porter of the house was cleaning wheat, and she fell asleep, and (so) the brothers escaped (notice) and entered into the house."

v. 8. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 45.

"Ignorance, poverty, and vanity, make many soldiers."—*Zimmerman.*

b Paxton.

the assassins are put to death

a Ge. xlviii. 16; 1 Ki. i. 29; Ps. xxxi. 7.

b "The exposure of the mutilated remains was intended as not

B.C. *cir.* 1043.

ment of their crime but also the attestation of David's abhorrence."—*Jamieson.*
c Harmer.

David confers with the elders of Israel at Hebron

displease the people, in three hours' time he is dragged even from his master's arms; they cut off his hands, head and feet, and throw them before the palace gate, with all the respect in the world, while the sultan (to whom they all profess an unlimited adoration) sits trembling in his apartment." Thus were the sons of Rimmon served for slaying Ishbosheth.[g]

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1–5. (1) **all the tribes,**[a] by deputations. **thy bone and thy flesh,**[b] figurative offer of allegiance. (2) **leddest,** *etc.*, acknowledg. that Dav. had been the foremost man, and the favourite of the people. (3) **all the elders,** comp. *v.* 1, *all the tribes.* **league,**[c] national contract or compact. **before the Lord,**[d] so accepting heartily the position of a *theocratic*, not an *independent*, king. **anointed Dav.,** prob. this the *third* time.[e] (4) This *v.* helps us to fix time for Dav.'s wanderings.[f] (5) *See* ch. ii. 11.

The trials of prosperity.—Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity; it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye; glorious, indeed, in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument; Adam himself (as the Rabbins say) did not dwell one night in paradise, but was poisoned with prosperity, with the beauty of his fair wife, and a beauteous tree; and Noah and Lot were both righteous and exemplary, the one to Sodom, and the other to the old world, so long as they lived in a place in which they were obnoxious to the common suffering; but as soon as the one of them had escaped from drowning and the other from burning, and put into security, they fell into crimes which have dishonoured their memories for above thirty generations together, the crimes of drunkenness and incest. Wealth and a full fortune make men licentiously vicious, tempting a man with power, to act all that he can desire or design viciously.[g]

6–10. (6) **to Jerusalem,**[a] to possess it, and make it the capital of the new kingdom. **Jebusites,**[b] Ge. x. 16. **except . . lame,**[c] confident in the strength of their fortress they showed how they despised their enemy by entrusting its defence to the blind and lame. (7) **Zion,** the upper and fortified part; the S.W. hill. (8) **gutter,**[d] comp. Ps. xlii. 7, *watersponts:* some part of the defence by wh. a skilful climber might get in. **wherefore,** they say, meaning it has become a proverb. **house,** not specifically the *temple.* (9) **fort,** or *stronghold*, *v.* 7. **Millo,** Ju. ix. 6, 46, 49. (10) **went on,** lit. *going and growing.*

Going and growing (*v.* 10).—The beginning of this chapter shows how David became at length king of all Israel.[g] Having given David a people, and the people a king, God next gave them both a capital city. What deep interest clusters round Jerusalem for the last 3,000 years!—and here we have that noted place first in the possession of the chosen people. David now commences building, fortifying, and enlarging his new city, henceforth to be known as "the city of David," also as the "city of the Great King." His course was still onward, and that under the Divine blessing. The marginal reading of this text is remarkable: and "David went going and growing." Some people go who do not grow; and some are growing who are not going on. Some have

the city of David

a "Jerus. lay close upon the northern border of the tribe of Judah, but within the territories of Benj. So without really removing from Judah, Dav. conciliated the Benjamites."—*Kitto.*
b Ge. xv. 21; Ex. iii. 8, 17; Nu. xiii. 29; Jos. xi. 3; Ju. i. 8, 21, xix. 10—12; 1 Ki. ix. 20.
c "Thou canst not come in hither; but the blind and lame

both these, with whom God is not. But all meet in David. In him we see activity, increase, and heavenly benediction. Many persons are always doing something, but they do not really prosper; and some seem to prosper without scarcely seeking it; while others lay out their energies discreetly, and have their reward. In David we find all these, and the blessing of God to crown all.

11—16. (11) **Tyre,** Jos. xix. 29. **masons,**[a] lit. *workers in stone for walls.* (12) **perceived,** realised by the favour of other nations thus gained. (13) **more,** *etc.*,[b] and precisely in this his dangers lay, and out of this his troubles came. (14—16) Comp. 1 Chr. iii. 5—9, xiv. 3—7.

The poor man's estate.—An aged poor man, dependent, as we may say, upon charity for his crust, though really dependent only on God, at one of those periodical social meetings of Christians for prayer and praise and holy conversation, which are found so profitable, was endeavouring to illustrate, in his humble way, how "the meek shall inherit the earth." "I went through my lord's park," said he, "and the great house looked so grand. Well, I said, 'Bless the Lord, it is a fine house.' I didn't envy it, bless the Lord! but I seemed so to enjoy the great house. I said, 'That's mine, surely; I enjoy it, I do.' Then the sheep looked so nice, and the cattle, and the horses; and I said, 'Bless the Lord! they are all my Father's, and they are all mine.' I didn't want to have them, but I did enjoy them so. And the trees, and the grass, and the plantations, all looked so beautiful, I peared to enjoy 'em so. I said, 'Lord, they are all Lord ——'s; but they're all mine too.'" And so they were. Well, indeed, would it have been for their proprietor, an unconverted man, had he been capable of enjoying them in the same sanctified manner.[c]

17—21. (17) **down to the hold,** to some place in lower ground, where he could meet the Phil. army. Poss. the hold at Adullam:[a] place suitable for concentrating Dav.'s army. (18) Rephaim, Jos. xv. 8. (19) **enquired,** *etc.*, this is carefully noticed in all Dav.'s undertakings. (20) **Baal-perazim,** *master* or *possessor of breaches.* (21) **images,** lares, or household gods. This indicates that the engagement was sudden, and unexpected by the Phil.

David inquiring of the Lord (*v.* 19):—David's inquiry here is twofold, concerning—I. His duty: "shall I go up?" One would think he needed not doubt this. What was he made king for, but to fight the battles of the Lord and Israel? But a good man loves to see God going before him in every step he takes. II. His success: "wilt thou deliver," etc. His conscience asked the former question, his prudence asked this.[b]

Inquiring of the Lord (*v.* 19).—I cannot here help observing, in honour of the Hebrew oracle, that its answers were such as became the character of the true God, who hath all events at His disposal, and cannot be mistaken as to those which He expressly foretells. Let any one compare it with the heathen oracles, and he will be forced to acknowledge that they were shuffling, ambiguous and vague; and the answers they gave of so uncertain a nature, so equivocal and deceitful, as that they might be interpreted in two direct contrary senses, might be equally true of two contrary events, and evidently demonstrated that they

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will keep thee off."—*Keil.*

d Or trans., "Whoso smiteth the Jebusites let him cast them down into the gutter, etc."—*Keil, Wordsworth.*

Hiram builds David a palace

a 1 Chr. xiv. 1.

b See Law and warning, Dc. xvii. 17.

v. 12. *F. D. Maurice, Proph. and Kings, 53.*

Home, my own home, tiny though thou be, to me thou seemest an abbey. My home, my mother's breast. Every dog is a lion at home.—*Italian.*

c Vanderkiste.

Baal-perazim

a Comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 13, 14.

b M. Henry.

"God's grace is necessary to quicken our endeavours. We are not to sit still, and do nothing, however, under pretence of dependence upon Divine assistance, but attend to the motions of God's providence, and the influences of His spirit. When God goes before, we should gird up our loins and follow Him."—*Orton.*

"In the Kensington Museum, there is a picture of Dr. John-

B.C. *cir.* 1043.

son, waiting outside in the anteroom of nobility to take his turn for an audience. The Lord our God, the King of kings, will give us an audience at any moment of the day, and, meeting with us, will bless us there."—*Rev. W. M. Strathan.*

If you always wait till you are disposed to pray, very likely you will not pray at all.

c Chandler.

who gave them out knew no more of those events on which they were consulted than they who inquired about them, who were often deceived in the application of them to their own destruction. Thus Crœsus was foretold by Apollo, that if he made war with the Persians he should overturn a great empire; which Crœsus, interpreting in his own favour, made war upon Cyrus, and thereby put an end to his own empire; after which, he severely reproached Apollo for deceiving him. And thus Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, who is said, upon the credit of an ambiguous oracle of the same Apollo, to have engaged in war with the Romans, was entirely defeated by them, and forced at last to retire with great disgrace and loss into his own dominions. Whereas, the answers of the Hebrew oracle had one plain, obvious, certain meaning, that needed no interpretation, that no one could possibly mistake the meaning of, and that was never found in one single instance to deceive or disappoint those who depended on and directed themselves by the order of it. Do this, or Do not this, was the peremptory form in which they who consulted it were answered; which, in the judgment of Cicero, was the manner in which the oracles of God ought to be delivered.[c]

Rephaim

a "Fr. *bacah*, to weep. Some tree that weeps with gum like the balsam, or that hangs down its leaves like the willow."—*Wordsworth.*

b C. H. Spurgeon.

Compass, v. 23.—The expression to "fetch a compass" is used of David going round to the rear of the Philistines (2 Sa. v. 23), and of St. Paul's vessel "going round" from Syracuse to Rhegium. "A woman shall *compass* a man" (Je xxxi. 22) as a protector. [*Gesenius*, who compares the Homeric phrase of one warrior striding round another to keep off his foe.] To "compass" with songs of deliverance (Ps. xxxii. 7) is to protect, or preserve triumphantly.

c J. Grant.

22—25. (22) **yet again,** to avenge the prev. defeat. (23) **not go up,** in the same way as before. God arranges for him even the plan of attack. **mulberry trees,** *pear trees*, LXX.; orig. word, *baca*,[a] prob. balsam. (24) **a going,** as moved by the wind. (25) **Geba,** prob. Gibeon; 1 Chr. xiv. 16. **Gazer,** or *Gezer*, Jos. x. 33

The sound in the mulberry trees (*v.* 24).—I. There are certain special duties, which are not duties to everybody, but only to some people. If we wish to know whether we are to perform these duties, we must seek signs concerning them, and not go and rush into a duty to which we are not called, unless we get a sign, even as David got the rustling among the mulberry leaves. II. There are certain duties which are common to all of us, but when we see some sign of God's Holy Spirit being in motion, or some other signs, these are seasons when we ought to be more than ever active, and more than ever earnest, in the service of our Master. The duties concern—1. The Christian Church at large; 2. Any particular congregation; 3. Every individual; 4. Our own children; 5. Ourselves.[b]

Advance of the Scots at Preston Pans.—At last the order was given to advance. A brief and solemn pause ensued, during which the clansmen, with one accord, took off their bonnets, and, reverently raising their faces to the blue heaven above them, uttered a short prayer, invoking God for victory. Then pulling their bonnets over their brows, they cast aside their plaids, and began the charge. Slowly and silently they advanced at first; but as they proceeded their pace quickened, and they moved with such rapidity that they had to halt once or twice to re-dress their broken ranks, before closing in the death struggle. Their pipes struck up in each clan the onset of its name, and shouts and war-cries began to rend the air. The mist now rolled away before the morning wind, and the spectators could see distinctly the steady and glittering line of the regulars, and the dark columns of the clans closing in upon them with brandished weapons.[c]

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

B.C. 1042.

1—5. (1) **again,** as a national assembly. **thirty thousand,**[a] comp. 1 Chr. xiii. 1; these were delegates fr. all the tribes. (2) **Baale,** Canaanitish name of *Kirjath-jearim;* Jos. xv. 9, 60. **ark,** 1 Sa. vii. 1, 2. **whose name,** lit. *upon which is called the name,* etc. (3) **new cart,** copying the Phil.,[b] instead of obeying the law.[c] **in Gibeah,** better not as proper name, but *the hill.* Obs. that in this Dav. appears to have made no special inquiry of God. (4) **accompanying,** lit. *with.* (5) **played,** attended the progress with music and dancing. **fir,** or *cypress.*[d]

Royal piety.—King Alfred the Great encountered many difficulties in obtaining Scriptural knowledge, which we have never experienced, and manifested an attachment to the sacred volume not often seen now. In those dark ages learning was considered rather a reproach than an honour to a prince. In addition to which his kingdom, for many years, was the seat of incessant war. Notwithstanding all this, Alfred found opportunity not only to read the Word of God but actually to copy out all the Psalms of David, which book he constantly carried in his bosom. That he profited greatly from reading the Scriptures is no matter of surprise when we learn that, after the example of David, he earnestly sought Divine teaching, and prayed that the Lord would open his eyes, that he might understand His law. He frequently entered the churches secretly in the night for prayer, and there lamented, with sighs, the want of more acquaintance with Divine wisdom. Having drunk into the spirit of the Bible, and experienced the rich consolation it affords, in setting before the burdened sinner a free and full salvation in Jesus, he naturally felt anxious to communicate the blessing to others; he therefore commenced a translation of the Psalms into Anglo-Saxon, but did not live to finish it.

6—11. (6) **Nachon,** *Chidon,*[a] 1 Chr. xiii. 9. **took hold,** according to Mosaic law, an unlawful act; Nu. iv. 15.[b] **shook,** stumbled; the road was a very steep, rough, and difficult one. (7) **error,** rashness; and doubtless to check Dav. in the very beginning of wilfulness, and remind him that he must act and rule, *within the written law.* (8) **displeased,** with himself partly; more in grief than anger. **breach,** Ex. xix. 22. (9) **afraid,** with a new reverence for the hallowed symbol. (10) **Gittite,**[c] of *Gath,* or *Gath-rimmon.* (11) **blessed,** with external signs of prosperity.

Christ in the house (v. 11).—Bible tells us of three arks—Noah's; that in which Moses was preserved; and the ark of the covenant, here spoken of. Describe this ark. It was a figure of Jesus. It was a blessing to Obed-edom: but there are three respects in which Christ is better than was the ark. (1) The ark was but a sign, and we, instead of the sign, have the Saviour Himself; (2) The ark could only be in one house at a time: Christ can be in the homes of all: (3) The ark was in Obed-edom's house only for three months: Christ, where He is welcomed, never leaves a house. Let us now show how Christ in the house secures blessings for a family. I. Where Christ is, there is a throne of grace. The mercy-seat, and the throne of grace, are

the ark brought from Kirjath-jearim

a Seventy thousand.—1 XX.
b 1 Sa. vi. 7, 8, 14.
c Nu. iv. 15, vii. 9, x. 21.
d Gesenius.

v. 5. *J.C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 349.
"The way to begin a Christian life is not to study theology. Right living will produce right thinking. Yet many men, when their consciences are aroused, run for catechisms and commentaries and systems. They do not mean to be shallow Christians. They intend to be thorough, if they enter upon the Christian life at all. Now, theologies are well in their place; but repentance and love must come before all other experiences." — *Beecher.*

the death of Uzzah

Obed-edom

a "Neither of these are proper names; *nachon,* means *smiting, chidon, the dart or stroke;* and these names were fixed on this place after the event." — *Wordsworth.*

b "Now he, he was not a priest, and yet touched the ark, God struck him dead." —*Josephus.*

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c 1 Chr. xv. 18, 21, 24.

vv. 6, 7. *Bp. Hall, Uzzah and the Ark, Contemp.*

vv. 6—9. *C. Simeon's Wks.* iii. 242.

vv. 11, 12. *G. Cubitt, Expos.*

d Dr. J. Edmond.

"Most of our churches have two doors. Superstition crept in long since at the one; and profaneness, in later days, shouldered in at the other."—*Spencer.*

Robert Boyle never mentioned the name of God without a visible pause in his discourse.

"Rather let my head stoop to the block, than these knees bow to any save to the God of heaven."—*Shakespeare.*

"Profaneness is an awful vice. Once more I ask, whose name is it if you so lightly use? The name of God! have you ever pondered its meaning? Have you ever thought what it is that you mingle thus with your passion and your wit? It is the name of Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain." — *Dr. Chapin.*

e *Stackhouse.*

the same thing: throne is the King's seat, and grace is mercy. Christ, as our mercy-seat, is our way to God—1. To be forgiven; 2. To have communion with Him: the throne of grace is the place for prayer. II. Where Christ is, there is a furnished table. A pot of manna was laid up beside the ark: our pot of manna is the Bible. III. Where Christ comes in, sin goes out. Dagon fell down before the ark. So idols fall down in the heart and in the house where Christ enters in. Conclusion:—(1) Have you Christ in the heart? He does not stay in a house where the hearts are kept shut; (2) Are you Christ in the house? Every true child shows something of Christ.[d]

Uzzah and the ark (*v.* 6).—Happy were it for us if we could account for the operations of God with the same facility that we can for the actions of His saints; but His counsels are a great deep, and His judgments (just though they be) are sometimes obscure and past finding out. For what shall we say to the fate of Uzzah? or what tolerable cause can we assign for his sudden and untimely end? It was now near seventy years since the Israelites had carried the ark from place to place, and so long a disuse had made them forget the manner of doing it. In conformity to what they had heard of the Philistines, they put it into a new cart, or wagon, but this was against the express direction of the law, which ordered it to be borne upon men's shoulders. It is commonly supposed that Uzzah was a Levite, though there is no proof of it from Scripture; but supposing he was, he had no right to attend upon the ark; that province, by the same law, was restrained to those Levites only who were of the house of Kohath; nay, put the case he had been a Kohathite by birth, yet he had violated another command, which prohibited even these Levites (though they carried it by staves upon their shoulders), upon pain of death, to touch it with their hands; so that here was a threefold transgression of the Divine will in this method of proceeding. The ark (as some say), by Uzzah's direction, was placed in a cart; Uzzah, without any proper designation, adventures to attend it; when he thought it in danger of falling, officiously, he put forth his hand, and laid hold on it (all violating of the Divine commands!) and this (as is supposed) not so much out of reverence to the sacred symbol of God's presence, as out of diffidence of His providence, as unable to preserve it from overturning. The truth is, this ark had so long continued in obscurity, that the people, in a manner, had almost lost all sense of a Divine power residing in it, and therefore approached it with irreverence. This is implied in David's exhortation to Zadok and Abiathar, after this misfortune to Uzzah (1 Chr. xv. 12, 13). What wonder, then, if God, being minded to testify His immediate presence with the ark, to retrieve the ancient honour of that sacred vessel, and to curb all licentious profanations of it for the future, should single out one that was the most culpable of many, one who, in three instances, was then violating His commands, to be a monument of His displeasure, against either a wilful ignorance or a rude contempt of His precepts, be they ever so seemingly small; that by such an example of terror He might inspire both priests and people with a sacred dread of His majesty, and a profound veneration for His mysteries.[e]

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12—16. (12) **gladness,**[a] music and song. In this removal the law was carefully observed. (13) **bare the ark,** on shoulders, by help of staves. **six paces,** *i.e.* as soon as they had begun to move: far enough to show they could bear it steadily. (14) **danced,** rhythmical movements accompanying the music. **linen ephod,** as the king, priest. (15) **shouting,** of the people. (16) Prob. on reaching the city of Jerus. David's excitement and joy were extreme.

David dances before the ark

a 1 Chr. xv.

v. 12. *Bp. Brotherton, Ss.* i. 1; *E. Cooper, Ss.* vii. 294.

v. 16. *R. P. Buddicom, Ss.* ii. 75.

David dancing before the ark (*v.* 14).—Consider—I. The expressions of David's joy. It was exceedingly heightened by—1. His reflections upon the past; 2. His anticipations of the future. II. What occasion we have for joy. The whole matter is typical of Christ's Ascension. *We* rejoice in this. In—1. The dignity of Christ's person; 2. The richness of the benefits imparted by Him. III. How far the expressions of our joy should correspond with David's. In point of ardour we should equal him; but our frame of mind should be more spiritual and refined.[b]

Oriental dances (*v.* 14).—In the Oriental dances, in which the women engage by themselves, the lady of highest rank in the company takes the lead; and is followed by her companions, who imitate her steps, and if she sings, make up the chorus. The tunes are extremely gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfully soft. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her who leads the dance, but always in exact time. This statement may enable us to form a correct idea of the dance which the women of Israel performed under the direction of Miriam, on the banks of the Red Sea. The prophetess, we are told, "took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and dances." She led the dance, while they imitated her steps, which were not conducted according to a set, well-known form, as in this country, but extemporaneous. The conjecture of Mr. Harmer is extremely probable, that David did not dance alone before the Lord, when he brought up the ark, but as being the highest in rank, and more skilful than any of the people, he led a religious dance of the males.[c]

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"Worldly hearts can see nothing in actions of zeal but folly and madness. Piety hath no grateful relish to their palate." —*Bp. Hall.*

"True joy is a serene and sober motion; and they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing; the seat of it is within, and there is no cheerfulness like the resolutions of a brave mind, that has fortune under its feet."—*Seneca.*

c Paxton.

17—19. (17) **his place,** within the Holy of Holies. **pitched,** lit. *stretched:* a new tent or tabernacle, specially prepared by Dav. **peace-offerings,** portions of wh. could be eaten by the people. (18) **blessed the people,**[a] comp. 1 Ki. viii. 14. (19) **flagon,** *lit.* "cake of grapes or raisins:" or "cake made with oil or mead."

the ark placed in David's tabernacle

a Gen. xxvii. 27—29, xlviii.; De. xxxiii.

v. 17. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 71.

vv. 17, 18. *T. S. Jones, Ss.*

v. 18. *Dr. M. Hole, Liturgy,* iii. 656.

Guests dismissed with presents (*v.* 19).—The entertainer at a feast occasionally dismissed his guests with costly presents. Lysimachus of Babylon having entertained Hemerus the tyrant of the Babylonians and Seleucians, with three hundred other guests, gave every man a silver cup, of four pounds' weight. When Alexander made his marriage feast at Susa in Persia, he paid the debts of all his soldiers out of his own exchequer, and presented every one of his guests, who were not fewer than nine thousand, with golden cups. The master of the house among the Romans, used also to give the guests certain presents at their departure, or to send them, after they were gone, to their respective habitations. It is probable that this custom, like many others which prevailed in Greece and Rome, was derived from the nations of Asia; for the sacred writers allude repeatedly to a similar custom, which closed the religious festivals or public

b Paxton.

"Like new liquor, which works over in foam and froth when thick and troubled, the joy of the sinner runs over in empty laughter

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and effervescent spirits when the heart is brimful of the wrath of God."—*Bp. Hopkins.*
b Paxton.

David's reply to Michal's taunt

v. 20. *Dr. J. Orton, Wks.* ii. 42; *R. Walker,* iii. 213; *W. Jay,* vi. 54.

v. 22. *C. Simeon, Wks.* iii. 252.

a C. R. Muston, M.A.

b Dr. J. M. Mathews.
c W. Snell.
v. 20. This uncovering is already satisfactorily explained. David took off his robes, and girt his undergarments with a linen ephod, for a description of which see Ex. xxxix. 5. Now the great men of the East will not let even their feet be seen whilst they are sitting with their legs under them. King David had assumed the costume of a working man, having only put the priest's girdle over it, but without the sacerdotal coats. It was this, and the act of dancing, that offended Saul's daughter, who had been brought up in all the regal pride which prevailed in the court of her father.

entertainments among the chosen people of God. When David brought up the ark from the house of Obed-edom, into the place which he had prepared for it, he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord. And as soon as the solemnity was finished, "he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread and a flagon of wine."[b]

20—23. (20) **how glorious!** the tone taunting and scornful. **uncovered,** not literally; Dav. had only removed his outer robe. (21) **before the Lord,** as an act of homage and devotion. (22) **vile,** *etc.*, self-abasement before God is true nobility. It may take diff. forms of expression in diff. ages. (23) **no child,** after this. If identical with *Eglah* (ch. iii. 5), she had a child previously.

Domestic religion (*v.* 20).—I. Domestic religion tends evidently to promote the temporal welfare of families. II. It is recommended by the substantial support and comfort it affords in all seasons of domestic trial and affliction. III. It is also powerfully recommended as ranking, under the Divine blessing, amongst the most efficient means of promoting the cause of truth and godliness.[a]—*The duty of family worship* (*v.* 20).—Let me invite your attention to—I. The obligations enjoining this service. There are certain duties of religion resulting so plainly from the relations we bear to each other and our Maker that they are perhaps not made the subject of express commandment. Of these duties family worship is one. II. The benefits resulting from it. 1. Peace of mind to the head of the family; 2. Religious instruction; 3. Domestic union and peace; 4. Growth of religion in the heart and in the Church at large. Conclusion:—Why is this duty not performed? Some urge—(1) Want of ability suitably to discharge the duty. We never know what we can do till we try; (2) Want of time. If you wish to find time you can; (3) Opposition in the family. And should opposition deter us from duty?[b] —*Blessing the household* (*v.* 20).—You should bless your households by—I. Your prayers. II. Your instructions. III. Your discipline. IV. Your example. Faith must be shown by works. Address—1. The young of families; 2. Parents and heads of families; 3. The whole congregation.[c]

Humility.—A nobleman, who died some years ago, was in the habit of attending a prayer-meeting in the country village where he lived, and where a few poor people were accustomed to assemble to seek the presence of the Divine Majesty. It was at first customary for these humble persons to make way for him if he came in a little after the appointed time; but he expressed his unwillingness to receive this mark of respect, saying he should be satisfied to occupy the lowest station. In other places he thought he had a right to claim the distinctions of his rank; but there he felt himself in the same situation as themselves. Such conduct displayed the genuine feelings of piety, which, rising superior to the artificial distinctions of society, rejoices in the fellowship of the body of Christians.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

B.C. 1042.

David tells Nathan he will build a house for God

1—3. (1) **rest,** *etc.*, some years after his coming to the throne. The condition of the country had involved long and serious wars, these delayed his purpose to build house for God. (2) **Nathan,**[a] first mentioned here. **curtains,** Ex. xxvi. 2. (3) **said,** at once, no doubt fully sympathising with Dav.'s wish.

David's prosperity (*v.* 2).—I. The utterance of grateful feeling. II. The mode chosen for proving and recording this gratitude. III. The prime duty of every man whom God has blessed and honoured with a home and household is to order and regulate his family as a living church to the service of the Creator.[b]

Security and prosperity.—O my God, vouchsafe to me Thy grace, that I may learn to rejoice as though I rejoice not, and as though I possessed not, and use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away (1 Cor. vii. 30, 31). In the midst of pleasures and enjoyments let me still feel, like the Psalmist, that the best of all is to draw near unto Thee; and I never forget Thy fear. Break also the snares with which Satan endeavours to make a prey of my soul, but which, in my misery, I cannot see; and for this I shall laud and praise Thee in eternity.[c]

a 1 Ki. i. 10, 22, 34; 1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. ix. 29.

vv. 1—3. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 87; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 478.

v. 2. *Dr. D. Featley, Clavis Mystica*, 570.

b C. M. Fleury, A.M.

c Gotthold

Nathan is instructed of the Lord

4—7. (4) **came,** by dream, or vision. (5) **thou,** not a fit work for thee, a fighting man.[a] (6) **tent,** referring more esp. to the curtains. **tabernacle,** to the boards, or framework. (7) **tribes,** as repres. by their rulers. Complaint had not come fr. God. "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

God, the Father of His people (*v.* 4).—It is this filial sentiment, the peculiarity of Christian piety, which brightens the enjoyments of life, even the most common of them, with a sense that, in our obscure homes, we are sitting, from day to day, at the board which our heavenly Father has spread. It is this feeling which mitigates and sanctifies affliction; wherein, even when the sharpest, we discern a token of the truth that God is "dealing with us as with sons," and is, in fact, preparing us for our home. It is this same affection, the distinct filial sentiment, which dispels the terrors of death; while the Christian believes that the Father of spirits is removing a member of His family from a less to a more desirable abode.[b]

a 1 Chr. xxii. 8, xxviii. 3.

"It must grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houses wainscoted with cedar, and painted with vermilion, while the temple of the Lord of hosts is destitute of every decent ornament." — *Hervey.*

b Isaac Taylor.

God's message to David by Nathan

8—11. (8) **sheepcote,** fold made for protection of flock by night; or may be *pasture.* (9) **all thine enemies,** at this time all were subdued (*v.* 1). (10) **appoint,** or continue to appoint. (11) **thee an house,** of thy family, reaching on to Messiah.

Position no barrier to grace.—Grace makes itself equally at home in the palace and the cottage. No condition necessitates its absence, no position precludes its flourishing. One may compare it in its power to live and blossom in all places to the beautiful blue-bell of Scotland, of which the poetess sings:

> "No rock is too high, no vale too low
> For its fragile and tremulous form to grow;

v. 8. *Dr. W. Enfield, Biog. Ss.* 152.

"Religion is a heaven-born thing, the seed of God in the spirits of men, whereby they are formed to a similitude and

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likeness of Himself."

a Spurgeon.

God's promise to David's son

a 1 K. viii. 20; Ps. cxxx. ii. 11.

b 1 Ch. xxii. 10, xxviii. 6.

c Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27; Ps. i. 5.

d 1 Sa. xv. 23, 28, xvi. 14; 1 Ki. xi. 13, 14.

vv. 12–14. *H. Stebbing*, i. 29.

vv. 12–16 *J. Alting, Op* 2, ii. 16; *E. Bickersteth, Broomsbury Lect.* iv. 1.

v. 13. *S. Mather, Fig. and Types*, 338; *Dr. R. Gordon*, ii. 488.

vv. 16, 17. *R. Hall, Wks.* vi. 227.

e C. H. Spurgeon.

David's gratitude to God

a For David's feelings see Ps. cxxxviii.

b "David expresses his astonishment that he, of such humble birth, and one so little in his own eyes, should not only be raised to the throne, but be assured of the perpetuity of the succession in his descendants, as if he were a man of high degree." —*Spk. Com.*

c Ps. cxxxix. 1.

d Comp. De. xxxiii. 29; Ps. cxlvii. 20; Ne. i. 10.

e Harmer.

David implores

It crowns the mountain
With azure bells,
And decks the fountain
In forest dells.
It wreathes the ruin with clusters grey,
Bowing and smiling the livelong day."[a]

12–17. (12) **thy seed,**[a] refer. to Solomon. (13) **build a house,**[b] 1 Ki. viii. 16—20. (14) **chasten,**[c] for correction; not as with Saul,[d] remove him fr. his place. (15) Gracious aid and favour, Is. lv. 3. (16) **established,** sure; confirmed. (17) **vision,** *v.* 4.

Constant mercy.—All the year round, every hour of every day, God is richly blessing us; both when we sleep and when we wake, His mercy waits upon us. The sun may leave off shining, but our God will never cease to cheer His children with His love. Like a river, His loving-kindness is always flowing, with a fulness inexhaustible as His own nature, which is its source. Like the atmosphere which always surrounds the earth, and is always ready to support the life of man, the benevolence of God surrounds all His creatures; in it, as in their element, they live, and move, and have their being. Yet as the sun, on summer days, appears to gladden us with beams more warm and bright than at other times; and as rivers are, at certain seasons, swollen with the rain; and as the atmosphere itself, on occasions, is fraught with more fresh, more bracing, or more balmy influences than heretofore; so it is with the mercy of God. It hath its golden hours, its days of overflow, when the Lord magnifieth His grace and lifteth high His love before the sons of men.[e]

18–23. (18) **sat,** *etc.*, he went into the tabernacle, and sat before the curtains of the holy of holies, where the ark was. No doubt he sat for meditation, and stood or knelt for prayer.[a] (19) **manner of man,** comp. 1 Chr. xvii. 17; word *manner* should be *law*. David is surprised that God should give to him the honour of founding a dynasty.[b] (20) **knowest,**[c] with kind and gracious knowledge. (21) **word's sake,** *etc.*, comp. Eze. xxxvi. 22. (22) **god,** idol, false god; one claiming to be God. (23) The involved construction of this *v.* indicates that it is partly a quotation fr. De. iv. 7, 32—34.[d]

The grateful monarch (*vv.* 18—20).—We shall notice—I. The posture he assumed: "sat before the Lord." II. The fervent gratitude he expressed. It was called forth by—1. Looking at the past; 2. Thinking of the future. III. The touching appeal he presented: "Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant." Knowest—1. His sinfulness; 2. His weakness; 3. His integrity; 4. His desires; 5. His obligations.

Sitting before the Lord (*v.* 18).—Pococke has given the figure of a person half sitting and half kneeling, that is, kneeling so as to rest the most muscular part of his body on his heels. This, he observes, is the manner in which inferior persons sit at this day before great men, and is considered as a very humble posture. In this manner, probably, David sat before the Lord when he went into the sanctuary to bless Him for His promise respecting his family.[e]

24–29. (24) **become their God,** not merely didst promise to be their God, but their history proves the promise fulfilled.[a]

(25) **for ever,** permanently; make it sure. In O.T. the words *for ever* only mean *for a long time.* (26) **magnified,** for the graciousness and faithfulness of Thy doings. (27) **revealed,**[b] fig. of opening, or uncovering the ear; moving the hair aside in order to whisper. **found . . Thee,** God's promises are the foundations of men's prayers. (28, 29) That wh. God purposes concerning Dav., David desires and prays for.[c] Fitting his wishes to God's will.

The promises an encouragement to prayer (*v.* 27.)—Show—I. The connection which exists between the promises of God and our prayers. God's promises are—1. Our warrant for asking; 2. Our security for receiving. II. Our duty in relation to them. We must—1. Embrace them as made over to us in Christ; 2. Treasure them up in our minds; 3. Wait with patience for their fulfilment.[d]

Strength for the Master's work found in prayer.—A youthful painter was once directed by his master to complete a picture on which the master had been obliged to suspend his labours on account of his growing infirmities "I commission thee, my son," said the aged artist, "to do thy best upon this work. Do thy best." The young man had such a reverence for his master's skill that he felt incompetent to touch the canvas which bore the work of that renowned hand. "Do thy best," was the old man's calm reply; and again, to repeated solicitations, he answered, "Do thy best." The youth tremblingly seized the brush, and, kneeling before his appointed work, he prayed, "It is for the sake of my beloved master that I implore skill and power to do this deed." Then, with suppressed emotion, he commenced his work, and he caught from it confidence and inspiration. His hand grew steady as he painted. Slumbering genius awoke in his eye. Enthusiasm took the place of fear. Forgetfulness of himself supplanted his self-distrust, and with a calm joy he finished his labour. The "beloved master" was borne on his couch into the studio, to pass judgment on the result. As his eye fell upon the triumph of art before him, he burst into tears, and throwing his enfeebled arms around the young artist, he exclaimed, "My son, I paint no more!" That youth subsequently became the painter of "The Last Supper," the ruins of which, after the lapse of three hundred years, still attracts annually to the refectory of an obscure convent in Milan hundreds of the worshippers of art. So shall it be with a youthful preacher or teacher who stands in awe of the work to which his Master calls him. Let him give himself away to it as his life's work, without reserve; let him do his best. Let him kneel reverently before his commission, and pray, "for the beloved Master's sake," that power and skill may be given him to do this deed. And the spirit of that Master shall breathe in the very greatness of the work.

B.C. 1056.

the Divine blessing

a Ge. xvii. 7, 8; Ex. vi 7.

b Ru. iv. 4; 1 S. ix. 15.

c Jo. xvii. 17

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"The circumstances of our prayers often lead our minds from God. We have to think of our sins and their circumstances when we confess them, and of our friends when we intercede for them, and of our wants when we pray for what we need, and of our mercies when we thank God for them; but if our minds were in a spiritual state, these things would rather be the means of drawing our hearts closer to God, than of drawing them from Him." — *Bickersteth.*

"As parents take more pleasure in their children's stammering than in the eloquence of others, even so the Lord takes pleasure in the prayers of His children."— *Ca*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1040.

David smites Moab

1, 2. (1) **Metheg-ammah,** comp. 1 Chr. xviii. 1; *Gath and her towns.* Perhaps we should read, "took the bridle of the mother out of the hands of the Phil.;" referring to Gath, the metropolis, or mother city.[a] (2) **casting . . ground,** making

a "To take the

B.C. *cir.* 1040.

them lie down. Comp. putting to death one in ten. The severity of sparing only one-third is supposed to have been the cruel treatment, by the Moabites, of David's family. Another suggestion is, that they had taken treacherous advantage of a temporary defeat in Dav.'s Syrian wars.[b] gifts, tribute.

Retribution (*v.* 2).—I. In the past, these Moabites were the bitter foes of Israel (Nu. xxii. 3). II. Will not God avenge His own elect? III. This retribution was wrought out through the natural affection of David, who now avenged the death of his father and mother; said by the Rabbins to have been treacherously slain by them. IV. Men, by their sin, often entail disaster upon succeeding generations.

David's treatment of the Moabites.—As this is certain, that the Amalekites, Philistines, Moabites, and other nations, were perpetual and inveterate enemies to the Hebrews, and invaded them whenever they were able, the Hebrews had a right to make reprisals, to attack them on every occasion that offered, and to treat them with that severity that was necessary to their own peace and safety for the future. I may add what Bishop Patrick and others observe, that the Jewish writers affirm that David exercised this severity on the Moabites because they had slain his parents and brethren, whom he committed to the custody of the king of Moab, during his exile. But I lay no great stress on this tradition, as it is wholly unsupported by the Scripture history, and because David's treatment of them is sufficiently justified by the ancient law of nations; as to which my reader will be abundantly satisfied by consulting Grotius.[c]

brille of a *mother* city out of the hand of its rulers, is to dispossess them of its government, as a man who takes the reins into his own hands out of those of the driver of a chariot, or rider of a horse, deprives them of control over it." —*Wordsworth.*

"If the reading be genuine, Metheg-ammah must be the name of some stronghold which commanded Gath, and the taking of which made David master of 'Gath and her towns.'" —*Spk. Com.*

b Ps. lx.; 1 Chr. xviii. 2.

c Chandler.

David conquers Hadadezer

3—8. (3) **Hadadezer,** Hadad (the sun-god of the Syrians)[a] is our help. The name is incorrectly spelt *Hadarezer*, 1 Chr. xviii. 3. **Zobah,**[b] a chief among the petty kingdoms of Syria; between Damascus and Euphrates. **recover,**[c] *etc.*, or to renew his attack. (4) **chariots,** not in the orig. Poss. the num. of horsemen was 1,700. Comp. the 7,000 of 1 Chr. xviii. 4. **houghed,**[d] Jos. xi. 6, 9. (5) **of Damascus,**[e] important city, imperilled by Dav.'s success against Hadadezer. (6) **garrisons,**[f] to preserve his conquest, and collect tribute. (7) **of gold,**[g] plated with gold. (8) **Betah and Berothai,** comp. Tibhath and Chun of 1 Chr. xviii. 8; not identified.

a Movers.

b 1 Sa. xiv. 47.

c Ge. xv. 18.

d Hough, to cut the hamstrings or back sinews of cattle, so as to disable them, fr. A S. *hoh*, the heel.

e 1 K. xi. 23—25.

f v. 14. 1 S. vii. 9.

g 1 K. x. 16.

h Analyst.

God over man (*v.* 6).—I. The employment in which David was engaged—in the service of God. 1. With a single eye to God's glory; 2. With all his heart; 3. Under the Divine direction. II. The care which David experienced. 1. Special: as to his person, circumstances, etc.; 2. Complete: in going out, returning, etc.; 3. Constant: by day and by night; in youth, manhood, age, health, sickness, etc. Application:—"Who will this day consecrate his services unto the Lord?" Those who do so will find it—(1) Delightful; (2) Honourable; (3) Easy; (4) Profitable.[h]

Toi sends his son to David

9—13. (9) **Hamath,**[a] principal city of Upper Syria, in the valley of the Orontes. David's victories relieved this king of a dangerous neighbour. (10) **Joram,** called Hadoram, 1 Chr. xviii. 10. (11) **which also,**[b] in addition to the treasures mentioned as seized in *vv.* 6, 7, 8. (12) **Syria,** should be *Edom*, as 1 Chr. xviii. 11. (13) **gat a name,** poss. meaning he erected a monument. The *Syrians*, in this *v.*, should be *Edomites*.[c] **valley of**

a Comp. Is. xxxvii. 13; Jer. xlix. 23.

b "This is the first instance of a practice uniformly followed

salt,[d] south of Dead Sea, called *El Ghor*, separated the territories of Edom and Judah.

Dedication of property (*v.* 11).—I. David's success in his wars may illustrate human successes in the battle of life. II. David's dedication of the spoil to sacred uses may remind men of the duty of offering to God the profits of the success which He gives. III. David's dedication of his portion of spoil and tribute may remind us that we are not to be liberal at the expense of others. IV. David's example may remind us that our first duty is to give ourselves to the Lord. David would erect a temple; but the best temple on earth, for the Lord, is the heart of the humble and contrite.

14—18. (14) **preserved,** with further idea of prospered. (15) **judgment,** may be regarded as decisions in *civil* cases; **justice,** as apportionment of guilt and punishment in *criminal* cases. (16) **recorder,**[a] remembrancer; historiographer; daily annalist. (17) Should prob. be Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech; we know that Abiathar was priest thro' David's reign.[b] **scribe,** secretary of state; comp. Ju. v. 14. (18) **Cherethites,** *etc.*, the king's body-guard. **chief rulers,** *cohanim*, principal officers of the court.

David's Preserver (*v.* 14).—I. David's goings were often in the midst of great perils. II. David's goings were governed by respect to the will of God. III. David's goings were under the constant care of God. Learn—1. Obedience the way to honour and safety; 2. God the best preserver of our life from destruction.

Piety of George III.—It has been stated, by those who had opportunities of acquiring correct information, that of the few books which the king read, the Bible was constantly on the table in his closet, and the commentary which he selected for his private reading was Matthew Henry's *Exposition*. A pious female servant, whose office it was to arrange the library room, has been often heard to say, "I love to follow my master in his reading of the Scriptures, and to observe the passages he turns down. I wish everybody made the Bible as much their daily study as my good master does."

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by David of reserving, after defraying expenses, and bestowing suitable rewards upon his soldiers, the remainder of the spoil taken in war to accumulate for the grand project of his life, —the erection of a national temple at Jerusalem."—*Jamieson.*

c Sept. has *Idumea.*

d 2 Ki. xiv. 7.

David's officers

a "A kind of chancellor, corresponding in some degree to the magister memoriæ in the court of the Roman emperors, and the Vaka Nuviseh, in the court of the ancient and modern kings of Persia. The Cheta (or Hittites) in the time of Rameses II. had also a recorder."—*Spk. Com.*

Est. vi. 1, 2; Is. xxxvi. 22; 2 Chr. xxxiv. 8.

b 1 Ki. ii. 26, 27.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—4. (1) Leisure from war permitted Dav.'s attention to internal organisation, and fulfilment of promises to his friend.[a] (2) **Ziba,** *statue; see* 2 Sa. xvi. 1—4, xix. 17, 24—30. (3) **kindness of God,** any great or lasting thing was called by the Hebrews, a thing of God; *e.g.* a tree of God; a mountain of God; a covenant of God. **lame,** ch. iv. 4. (4) **Machir,** *etc.*,[b] the Ammiel, or Eliam, here seems to have been father of Bathsheba.[c] **Lo-debar,** east of Jordan; not identified, but near Mahanaim.[d]

Life's changes and lessons (*v.* 3).—We have here an illustration of—I. The mutability of worldly greatness: Saul's house nearly destroyed. II. The efficiency of the favour and blessing of God in the way of well-doing: David exalted. III. A truly magnanimous spirit exhibited by David towards the house of Saul, his bitterest enemy. IV. Genuine and disinterested friendship. V. The remarkable interposition of Providence in behalf of the

David's kindness to Mephibosheth

a 1 Sa. xx. 41, 42, xxiii. 18.

b 2 Sa. xvii. 27—29.

c 1 Chr. iii. 5.

d Comp. *Lodebir*, Jos. xiii. 26.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

v. 1. *Dr. H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 102.

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fatherless and afflicted. VI. The advantage attending a pious ancestry.[e]

e Dr. T. S. Clarke.

Change is a part of life.—

"Change is of life a part." Its power
As a shadow marks each passing hour.
It silvers the wave with sparkling light,
With rainbow beauty, intensely bright.
In the clouds and tempests that roll on high
It reigns in gorgeous revelry.

"Change is of life a part." Its spell
Has thrilled the hero's heart as a knell;
Clouding his hopes in their hour of pride,
Till the haughty spirit within him died:
It came where earthly triumph had been,
Shading with sadness the gorgeous scene.

"Change is of life a part." E'en where
Soft music falls on the perfumed air,
In banquets brilliant as those of old,
When the red wine sparkled in sculptured gold,
'Twill come; like a cloud o'er a summer sky,
Like a phantom whose presence we cannot fly.

"Change is of life a part." The flow
Of time reveals its power below;
In memory's visions, as on they sweep,
Breathing a truth sacred and deep,
That in heaven alone change cannot be,
Where the sunlight of bliss shines eternally.[f]

"And what thinkest thou," said Socrates to Aristodemus, "of this continual love of life, this dread of dissolution, which takes possession of us the moment we are conscious of existence?" "I think of it," was the reply, "as the means employed by the same great and wise Artist, deliberately determined to preserve what He has made."

f Ch. of Eng. Mag.

Youth and the lark have their song for the morning, while age and the nightingale have theirs for the evening.

5—8. (5) **Mephibosheth,**[a] ch. iv. 4. (6) **did reverence,** made obeisance; noticed, perhaps, bec. his physical infirmity made it very painful work. Poss. also he was in fear of his life. (7) **all the land,** the private estate. **eat,** *etc.*, as a recognised royal prince. So Dav. preserved both his *wealth* and his *title*. (8) **dead dog,** throughout Scrip. the dog is the symbol of worthlessness, the object of contempt and dislike.[b]

Mephibosheth does homage to David

a 1 Chr. viii. 34.

b 1 Sa. xxiv. 14.

David and Mephibosheth (on the whole chapter).—This fragment of history may be looked upon—(1) As supplying a fine illustration of human friendship; 2. As a faint image of Divine love to the world. Let us consider the latter. I. The disinterestedness of David's kindness is illustrative of the Divine. This kindness was—1. Unmerited; 2. Unsought. The world did not seek the gift of Christ, because—(1) It did not feel the need of a Saviour; (2) Had it felt this, it could never have supposed that such a gift was possible. II. The occasion on which this kindness was displayed is illustrative of the Divine. This kindness was shown—1. Because of some one else: "for Jonathan's sake;" 2. On account of some one else who was very near to the heart of the king. III. The results which it realised illustrative of the Divine. 1. It found out Mephibosheth; 2. It restored him to his patrimonial inheritance; 3. It exalted him to distinguished honours; 4. It secured him the command of suitable attendants.[c]

e 1 Sa. xxiv. 14.

f Dr. P. Doddridge, Ss. i. 177.

c Dr. Thomas.

"Charity commands us, where we know no ill, to think well of all; but friendship, that always goes a step higher, gives a man a peculiar right and claim to the good opinion of his friend."—*Dr. South.*

Mephibosheth dwells in

9—13. (9) **servant,** Josephus says *freedman*. (10) **till the land,** so act as steward of the estate. He gave to Mephib. all

that was left after paying expenses of working the estate. (11) For **he shall eat**, read *he did eat;* an historical statement. (12) **young son**, word means a little child.[a] (13) **lame**, *etc.*, see how this affected his future conduct.[b]

Mephibosheth a type of the Lord's people (*v.* 13).—I. The Lord's people are dear for another's sake: for Christ's sake, God raises us from poverty and banishment to courtly companionship, noble rank, and royal provision. II. Their deformity shall not rob them of their privileges. Lameness is no bar to sonship. Our right does not limp, though our might may. III. Yet grievous disability may mar the persons of the best-loved saints. Here is one feasted by David, and yet so lame in both his feet that he could not go up with the king when he fled from the city, and was therefore maligned and injured by his servant, Ziba.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1063.

the king's palace

a Through this son Saul's posterity was preserved: 1 Chr. viii. 35—40, ix. 40—44.

b 2 Sa. xvi. 1—4, xix. 24—30.

c **C. H. Spurgeon.**

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—5. (1) **the king**, named *Nahash.*[a] (2) **comfort him**, by a friendly message of condolence and sympathy. (3) **princes**, *etc.*, prob. young advisers, such as misguided Rehoboam.[b] Dav.'s treatment of neighbouring countries made their fears excusable, but not their insults. (4) **shaved**, *etc.*, a young man's practical joking, intended to make the ambassadors ridiculous and contemptible.[c] **buttocks**, indicates design to make them exposed and indecent. (5) **Jericho**, chosen as the first town after crossing the Jordan.

David's gratitude (*v.* 2).—I. It is a characteristic of noble minds that they are not unwilling to acknowledge past favours. II. If the good done by a man is not repaid to him, the fruit may be reaped by his children. Bread cast on the waters, etc. Those who sow good deeds may die, but their posterity will reap the harvest.

Shaving (*v.* 4).—To shave off a part of the beard was as great an insult as could be offered. Arabs and Turks are said by eminent travellers to value their beards almost more than life. "One of the buffoons of the bashaw took it into his head one day, for a frolic, to shave his beard, which is no trifle among the Turks; for some of them I really believe, would sooner have their head cut off than their beard. In this state he went home to his women, who actually thrust him out of the door; and such was the disgrace of cutting off his beard, that even his fellow buffoons would not eat with him until it was grown again."[d]

David's messengers to Hanun

a 1 Sa. xi. 1.

b 1 Ki. xii. 10, 11, 12; 1 Chr. xix. 1.

c "To shave off one side of the beard only was even more ignominious than to remove it altogether, although *that*, among the ancient and modern Eastern nations that cultivate the beard, was an offence not to be named without horror. It is very difficult for us to realise the intense appreciation of, and respect for, beards, which is entertained among the Persians, Arabians, and other bearded nations." — *Kitto.*

d Belzoni.

6—10. (6) **stank**,[a] fig. for the anger roused in Dav. against them. **hired**, bec. they felt unable to cope with David by themselves. **Beth-rehob**, Nu. xiii. 21; Ju. xviii. 28. **Zoba**, ch. viii. 3. **Maachah**, De. iii. 14. **Ish-tob**, trans. men of Tob. Ju. xi. 3, 5. (7) **all . . men**, indic. the serious preparations judged necessary. (8) **gate**, of *Rabbah*,[b] chief city of Ammon. (9) **before and behind**,[c] so disposed that whichever he attacked, the other would fall upon his rear. (10) This required a twofold attack by him.

One evil leads to another (*v.* 10).—I. Review the previous course of these children of Ammon (*vv.* 1—5). II. Notice the effect of

David sends Joab to meet Ammon

a Ge. xxxiv. 30; Ex. v. 21.

b De. iii. 11; Jos. xiii. 25.

"Now *Ammân*, 22 miles fr the Jordan. There are now exten-

B.C. *cir.* 1062.

sive ruins in an elevated valley on the banks of the stream Moiet Ammân, after a short course flowing into the Jabbok, or Zurka, wh. divided the Heb. territory fr. that of the Ammonites." *Ayre.*

c "The native troops covered the city, while the Syrian mercenaries lay at some distance, encamped in the fields." — *Jamieson.*

d Paxton.

"When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war, the laboured battle sweat and conquest bled." — *Lee.*

conduct that grew out of unjust suspicions. Ammon raises an army, hires foreign soldiers. David prepares an army. War imminent. III. Observe what small matters, comparatively, affect the peace and prosperity of nations.

Military harangues before battle.—Immediately before the signal was given, and sometimes in the heat of battle, the general of a Grecian army made an oration to his troops, in which he briefly stated the motives that ought to animate their bosoms; and exhorted them to use their utmost force and vigour against the enemy. The success which sometimes attended these harangues was wonderful; the soldiers, animated with fresh life and courage, returned to the charge, retrieved in an instant their affairs, which were in a declining and almost desperate condition, and repulsed those very enemies by whom they had been often defeated. Several instances of this might be quoted from Roman and Grecian history, but few are more remarkable than that of Tyrtæus, the lame Athenian poet, to whom the command of the Spartan army was given in one of the Messenian wars. The Spartans had at that time suffered great losses in many encounters; and all their stratagems proved ineffectual, so that they began to despair almost of success, when the poet, by his lectures on honour and courage, delivered in moving verse to the army, ravished them to such a degree with the thoughts of dying for their country, that, rushing on with a furious transport to meet their enemies, they gave them an entire overthrow, and by one decisive battle brought the war to a happy conclusion. Such military harangues, especially in very trying circumstances, are perfectly natural, and may be found perhaps in the records of every nation.[d]

Joab's exhortation to the army

a "Relief of *Medeba*, an Israelite town, was one of the immediate objects in view." —*Spk. Com.*

11—14. (11, 12) **play the men,** the part of valiant men. **cities,**[a] which were imperilled. (13) **fled,** Joab's onslaught was well-nigh irresistible; and the mercenaries would not expect this double attack. (14) **into the city,** within shelter of their fortific. Prob. not the time of year for commencing a siege, nor was Joab prepared to undertake it.

Joab's exhortation (*v.* 12).—As we review Joab's life, we feel he was a bad man with a few good qualities, rather than a good man with many failings. Despite his character let us give heed to his counsels. There are three commendable things in the words he spake. I. Unflinching bravery: "be of good courage," etc. We need courage to—1. Be faithful; 2. Do valiantly; 3. Suffer patiently. This courage or manliness is opposed to childish weakness, effeminacy, brutishness, lethargy, and obstinacy. It includes skill, prudence, stability, activity, hopefulness. II. Strong patriotism: "for our people," etc. The most potent argument he could use. III. Determined submission: "the Lord do," etc. Belief in the sovereignty of God is not inconsistent with the greatest courage and the most resolute activity. The Christian labours because of God's decrees.[b]

David defeats the Syrians

a Jamieson.

b Ewald, Grove.

c Spk. Com.

15—19. (15) **gathered,** *etc.*, wh. they could do when Joab had left the district. (16) **Hadarezer,** ch. viii. 3. **the river,** Euphrates. **Helam,** poss. *Kelam*, a border town of Eastern Manassch,[a] or Almatha, on the W. of Euphrates,[b] or the word should be translated, *their host.*[c] (17) Mention of Helam as the site of the battle, would be very suitable here. (18) Comp.

1 Chr. xviii. 18; the horsemen are there more prob. called footmen. **servants**, subjects, tributaries.

The losing side (v. 19).—I. These Syrians were willing to help Ammon, for pay, against Israel. Are there not yet mercenary souls who think antagonism profitable? II. Mere mercenary helpers leave the losing side. Hirelings not to be relied upon. III. Great disasters needful sometimes to fill men with a wholesome dread. IV. Behold the fate of those who fight against the royal Son of David.

B.C. *cir.* 1062.

v. 19. "Feared," and "perhaps engaged to fight no more in haste against Israel, as the beaten Parthians swore that they would fight no more against the Romans for ever."—*Trapp*.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1035.

1—5. (1) **when kings go forth**, only at certain times would the state of the country permit the march of armies; and campaigns were not usually prolonged. **destroyed**, ravaged the Ammonite territory. **Rabbah**, ch. x. 8. (2) **eveningtide**, the time after his midday sleep.[a] Evening began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. **washing**,[b] or bathing in the fountain in her courtyard. (3) **sent**, *etc.*, no doubt Dav. hoped she was an unmarried woman, such as he had a right to claim at his will. **Eliam**, ch. xxiii. 34. (4) **took her**, in his passion disregarding the fact that she was a wife. (5) Men often are willing to sin, but sorely troubled at the consequences.

David's adultery with Bathsheba.

a "The Heb., like other Orientals, rose at daybreak, and always took a nap during the heat of the day, and afterwards they lounged in the cool of the evening on their flat-roofed terraces."—*Jamieson*.

b "Fr. the roof of his palace, the king looked down on the cisterns which were constructed on the top of the lower houses of Jerusalem, and then conceived for Bathsheba the uncontrollable passion to which she offered no resistance."—*Stanley*.

David's temptation (v. 2).—I. We are never out of the reach of temptation. II. Useful occupation a safeguard against temptation. David should have been fighting the Lord's battles. III. It is possible the king mounted his housetop for devotional purposes. Even our closet cannot exclude Satan.

Persian baths (v. 2).—Describing a bath in the women's court, an eminent traveller writes:—The royal master of this Hortus Adonidis frequently takes his noonday repose in one of the upper chambers which encircle the saloons of the bath; and, if he be inclined, he has only to turn his eyes to the scene below, to see the loveliest objects of his tenderness, sporting like Naiads amidst the crystal streams, and glowing with all the bloom and brilliancy which belongs to Asiatic youth. In such a bath court it is probable that Bathsheba was seen by the enamoured king of Israel. As he was walking at evening-tide on the roof of his palace, he might undesignedly have strolled far enough to overlook the andron of his women, where the beautiful wife of Uriah, visiting the royal wives, might have joined them, as was often the custom in those countries, in the delights of the bath.[c]

v. 3. *Dr. H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* ii. 205.

c Sir R. K. Porter.

6—9. (6) **Uriah**, one of the "thirty," 2 Sa. xxiii. 39. (7) To hide his sin Dav. tried to deceive Uriah, so met him with every conciliation. (8) **go down**, *etc.*, Dav. wanted him to rest at home, and "partake of the indulgences of family life." **mess**,[a] present fr. the royal table to enjoy himself with at home. (9) **at the door**, in the guard's quarter at the gate of the palace.

David sends for Uriah

a Ge. xliii. 34. "David cast about how to colour and cover his sin with fair pretences, as Alcibiades embroidered a curtain with lions and eagles, to cover his picture of owls and

Meats from the king's table (v. 8).—Any present immediately communicated from a royal personage was considered particularly valuable. "Arrangements were now made for our introduction to the monarch immediately on his return, which he had fixed, as the viziers declared, for the thirteenth day of this month.

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asses, but all would not do. God so disposing that David's sin should come to light."—*Trapp.*
b Sir W. Ouseley.

Uriah the guest of David

a God did not permit Dav.'s base schemes to succeed, that he might realise all the wickedness of sin which he could not cloak.

Sin nowhere appears greater or more terrible than in the Bible: yet how blessed to find there, that even if we have broken the whole Law, and every precept of it, there is still, to the true penitent, an offer of pardoning and complete mercy, so full and immediate that his sins are blotted out and forgotten.

b Dr. Guthrie.

death of Uriah

a "By indulging David in this secret sin, Joab was persuaded that he would acquire a complete ascendency over him, which he did."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 14, 15. *Hon. G. C. Perceval, Plain Ss.* iii. 108.

If you would form a true estimate of sin, do not weigh it in

Meanwhile he sent to the ambassador a very flattering *khûsh-ámedy*, or welcome, with some of the royal *shikár*, or game, three antelopes, and fifty *kábks*, or partridges, killed by his own hand; a circumstance which considerably enhanced the value of this present, and entitled the bearer to a recompense, not less than the wages of half a year."[b]

10—13. (10) **from a journey,** when every one is glad to get rest at home. (11) "The austere, soldier-like conduct of the sturdy Canaanite" thwarted David's deceptive scheme. So David sunk deeper into sin, and tried to excite Uriah's passion by making him drunk. (12) **to day,** over another night. (13) **drunk,** evidently with fermented wine: yet even then Uriah kept his oath.[a]

Uriah the patriot (*v.* 11).—I. That there are times in national history when private individuals must deny themselves the pleasures of domestic life for the public good. II. That the patriotic sentiments of the self-denying man unintentionally convey the sharpest reproof to the self-indulgent. III. That men sometimes speak the plain truth in ignorance of facts; who would not dare so to speak if they knew more.

Watching against temptation.—"Stand in awe and sin not," "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," are warnings which no good man should disregard. Is this to be a coward? Anything else were the height of rashness. Who sleeps by a magazine of gunpowder, needs to take care even of sparks; who walks on slippery ice, let him not go star-gazing, but look to his feet and take care of falling. Whatever provokes sin, though beautiful as Bathsheba, what is in its nature calculated, and by the cunning fiend intended, to draw us into transgression, is a danger against which we cannot be too much upon our guard. Though in themselves innocent, pleasures are sought at too great hazard that grow on dizzy crag, or among the grass where adders creep, or in the lofty crevice of some tottering wall, or on the brink of a swollen flood; and all the more if, such as our poet describes—

> "Pleasures are like poppies spread,
> We nip the flower, the bloom is fled;
> Or like the snow-flake on the river,
> A moment white, then gone for ever."[b]

14—17. (14) **a letter,** a despatch: what a miserable night Dav. must have spent before he made the resolve to murder the man he had so deeply wronged. (15) **retire ye,** *etc.*, leave him exposed. If Joab had been a noble man, he would have refused obedience. He pandered to the king in order to get power over him.[a] (16) **observed,** Ju. i. 24. (17) This was a sham attempt at carrying the city by assault.

David's wicked stratagem (*v.* 15).—I. The causes of it. 1. A desire to shelter Bathsheba from her husband's anger on discovering her infidelity: 2. Perhaps some anger occasioned by the rebuke contained in Uriah's reply (*v.* 11). II. The plausibility of it. 1. Uriah had spoken brave and patriotic words, should be taken at his word; 2. Should be awarded the post of danger, as that of honour—the leader of the forlorn hope. Note: No plausibility of speech or conduct can effectually cover sin.

A parallel case.—The following history is, in some points, an

accurate counterpart to that of David. "Nour Jehan signifies the light of the world; she was also called Nour Mahl, or the light of the seraglio; she was wife to one Sher Afkan Khan, of a Turcoman family, who came from Persia to Hindostan in very indifferent circumstances. As she was exquisitely beautiful, of great wit, and an elegant poetess, Jehanguire, the sultan, was resolved to take her to himself. He sent her husband, who was esteemed the bravest man in his service, with some troops to command in Bengal, and afterward sent another with a greater force to cut him off. When he was killed, Nour Jehan was soon prevailed upon to become an empress. The coin struck in Jehanguire's reign, with the signs of the zodiac, were not, as is usually thought in Europe, done by his empress's order; nor did she reign one day as the common opinion is, but she ruled the person who reigned for above twelve years."[b]

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the light balance of public opinion.

Proneness to sin is a heavy cross to the believer; but to him who believes not, sin is a light matter. "Fools make a mock of sin."

b Fraser.

18—21. (18) **sent,** *etc.*, regular information was supplied to the king. (19) **matters,** a general sketch of its progress. (20) **so nigh,** Joab knew Dav. well, and felt sure of what he would say. In the military science of the day it was considered wholly wrong to expose troops under the wall of a besieged city without shelter. The shelter was some form of continuous shield held over them. (21) **Abimelech,** Ju. ix. 35.[a] **Jerubbesheth,** Jerubbaal.

The death of Uriah (*v.* 21).—I. Compassed by the craft of David, Joab being an accessory. II. Occurring while fighting bravely against the enemies of Israel. III. Removing Uriah from the scene of his disgrace. He probably never knew of his dishonour. IV. Consoling David with the hope that his other sin would not be known. He had now murder as well as adultery to answer for, besides the duplicity they both involved.

David informed of Uriah's death

a "The Bk. of Ju. was evidently known at this time. Joab quoted God's Word, but was not careful to keep it."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 20, 21. *Dr. J. Scott, A Ser.* Cambridge, 1764.

22—27. (22, 23) **came out,** making a sally; then retreating, so as to draw the Israelites after them under the walls, from wh. stones and arrows were cast on them. (24) The messenger did not wait for what Joab expected the king would say. (25) This message is full of sanctimonious hypocrisy. **encourage thou,** *lit.* go on and take the city. (26) **mourned,** prob. only the customary seven days.[a] (27) **displeased,** play on word used in *v.* 25. See figure: "evil in the eyes."

God displeased with David (*v.* 27).—I. Let those consider these words who tauntingly refer to David as a man after God's own heart. II. Let good men remember that Divine grace is not a royal license to sin. III. Let all remember that sin is followed by Divine displeasure; and if not by repentance, certainly by punishment.

An easy mode of obtaining a wife (*v.* 27).—The kings of Israel appear to have taken their wives with very great ease. This is quite consistent with the account given in general of the manner in which Eastern princes form matrimonial alliances. "The king, in his marriage, uses no other ceremony than this; he sends an ezagi to the house where the lady lives, where the officer announces to her it is the king's pleasure that she should remove instantly to the palace. She then dresses herself in the best manner, and immediately obeys. Thenceforward he assigns her an apartment in the palace, and gives her a house elsewhere in any part she chooses. Then when he makes her *iteghe*, it seems to be the nearest resemblance to marriage; for whether in

David takes Bathsheba to wife

a "If we feel how bad Dav.'s conduct was, we should not miss observing how readily Bathsheba yielded to him, and became a full partner in his crime. She was a woman of superior talents and address in obtaining the object of her ambition."—Partly fr. *Taylor's Calmet.*

v. 27. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 117; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan,* i 85, 454; *H. Thompson, Davidica,* 77. Nothing in the visible creation of God has sunk so low as a lost sinner; and yet nothing may, through infinite

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mercy, be raised so high.

b *Burder.*

the court or the camp, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence, that he, the king, has chosen his handmaid, naming her, for his queen; upon which the crown is put on her head, but she is not anointed."[b]

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Nathan reproves David

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

a 2 Sa. xii. 14.

b Comp. 2 Sa. xiv. 2—11; 1 Ki. xx. 35—41.

c "This apologue fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin,—not its sensuality, or its impurity, so much as its meanness and selfishness."—*Stanley.*

See *Bp. Hall's Contemp.* and *Dr. T. Fuller's David's Heinous Sinne, Heartie Repentance, Heavie Punishment: A Poetical Tract*; *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* v. 97; *Bp. Newton*, ii. 315.

d *J. Bolton.*

1—6. (1) **Nathan,** ch. vii. 2. This occurred at least nine months after.[a] **and said,** prob. asking the judgment of the king on the point presented.[b] (2, 3) **little ewe lamb,** pastoral people have pet lambs, brought up with the children, and addressed in terms of endearment. (4) **spared to,** was unwilling to give of his own.[c] (5) Dav. not seeing at first the application of the parable, let out his righteous feeling. Not connecting it with himself, he soon made a judgment. (6) **no pity,** this the essence of his sin.

One little ewe lamb (*v.* 3).—As we study this parable, it reminds us how tenderly—I. We should treat dumb animals. Life is a sacred thing; it is God's mark of ownership, and if we put it into harness for our gain, we undertake to nourish and cherish it. God will look to us to do so. II. God deals with us. We deserve to perish; but He directs that we shall be nursed as if we were princes. III. We should respect the happiness of others. God, who gives the "poor man" his one little ewe lamb, will punish those who would deprive him of it. IV. God loved Jesus. He was His Lamb—His "one" Lamb.[d]

A personal application.—While Mr. Whitefield was one day preaching at Plymouth, in America, Mr. Tanner, who was at work as a shipbuilder, at a distance, heard his voice, and resolved, with five or six of his companions, to go and drive him from the place where he stood: and for this purpose they filled their pockets with stones. When, however, Mr. T. drew near, and heard Mr. Whitefield earnestly inviting sinners to Christ, he was filled with astonishment; his resolution failed him, and he went home with his mind deeply impressed. On the following evening he again attended, and heard Mr. Whitefield, on the sin of those who crucified the Redeemer. After he had expatiated on their guilt, he appeared to look intently on Mr. Tanner, as he exclaimed with energy, "Thou art the man!" These words powerfully affected Mr. T.; he felt his iniquities to be awfully great, and in the agony of his soul, he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The preacher then proceeded to proclaim the free and abundant grace of Jesus, which He commanded to be preached among the very people who had murdered Him; on hearing which Mr. T. was encouraged to hope for mercy, and he surrendered himself to Christ. This sermon was made eminently useful to many other persons.

7—10. (7) **thou the man,** note the fearlessness of the prophet before the king.[a] (8) **master's wives,** "no wife of a king of the Heb. nation could ever be married to any one but his successor; *see* 1 Ki. ii. 22."[b] (9) Without any equivocation, Dav.'s sins are brought home to him, and they were no less than murder and adultery. (10) **from thy house,** or family. His sin had been a family sin; his punishment should come also

thou art the man

a 1 Sa. xv. 22, 23.

b *Wordsworth.*

c "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

in the family.[c] **despised me,** by not acting according to Divine laws.

Thou art the man (*v.* 7).—Consider—I. The fidelity of the prophet: zeal, prudent and circumspect, courageous and intrepid. II. The directness of the accusation. 1. Conscience is to be aroused from its long repose; 2. Promises are to be individually applied, and warnings personal; 3. We preach, in the midst of numbers, *to* individuals; 4. Self-love, and besetting sins, seclude men from the truth, till it comes with Divine power. III. The submission of the penitent. 1. His confession is open; 2. It is contrite; 3. It has regard to God; 4. It terminates in practical, sincere resolutions. Conclusion:—We are all sinners, like David. We are all reproved, as he was, by Word of God; ministers of God; conscience. Are we penitent, like him?

A bold preacher (*v.* 7).—M. Bourdaloue was called "the king of preachers, and the preacher to kings;" and Louis himself said that he would rather hear the repetitions of Bourdaloue than the novelties of another. With a collected air, Bourdaloue had little action; he generally kept his eyes half closed, and penetrated the hearts of the people by the sound of a voice uniform and solemn. On one occasion, he turned the peculiarity of his external aspect to a very memorable advantage. After depicting, in soul-awakening terms, a sinner of the first magnitude, he suddenly opened his eyes, and casting them full on the king, who sat opposite to him, he added, in a voice of thunder, "Thou art the man." The effect was confounding. When he had finished his discourse, he went and threw himself at the feet of his sovereign, and said, "Sire, behold at your feet one who is the most devoted of your servants; but punish him not, that in the pulpit he can own no master but the King of kings."

11—14. (11) Part of this threatening was fulfilled in Absalom, ch. xvi. 22; prob. the fulfilment came on the very house-top where Dav.'s passion had been stirred. (12) **secretly,** such was Dav.'s purpose, but they in the palace must have known about it. (13) **I have sinned,** the language of a sincerely stricken and humbled man.[a] (13) **put away,** *etc.*, as God promises to do for the truly penitent. **not die,**[b] according to his own judgment, *v.* 5. (14) **the child,** who was the fruit of his sin.

The fall and recovery of the believer (*v.* 13).—Consider—I. What kind of sin this was: not a case of common sin in an irreligious person, but of sin in a believer. This should—1. Make believers cautious; 2. Take away from sinners any occasion of presuming. II. The causes that lead to the believer's falling into sin. Chiefly these:—1. Too great security and confidence in his state; 2. Idleness and inactivity in the Lord's service; 3. Neglect of prayer and watching. III. The immediate effects of the believer's fall—1. On himself; 2. On those around him: the enemies of the Lord rejoice, Christian brethren weep. IV. The good effects which it is made the means of producing by the blessing of God. 1. As leading to repentance it will show the world what true sorrow for sin is; 2. To the believer himself several good effects will come.[c]

David's repentance (*v.* 13).—Sir Jaheel Brenton, of the Royal Navy, brought from the Cape of Good Hope a Hottentot boy, and stated to Dr. Philip that a change had taken place in the character of the boy; in proof of which, he adds: "A clergyman asked

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"Henceforward for about 20 years Dav. had no respite fr. domestic affliction."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 7. *J. Strype, Assize S.* 1689; *Dr. N. Marshall,* ii. 350; *T. Newlin,* 139; *Dr. R. Moss,* 1; *Jer. Tidcombe,* 237; *Dr. E. Cobden,* 311; *L. Sterne,* i. 87; *Bp. Butler's Fifteen Sers.* 100; *J. Jenkins,* ii. 146; *W. Enfield,* ii. 200; *J. Venn,* i. 292; *W. Draper,* 78; *W. Gilpin,* iv. 98; *Bp. Mant,* i. 279; *C. Girdlestone,* ii. 165; *J. Slade,* i. 174; *W. Bishop,* 99; *Bp. Bethell,* ii. 301; *Bp. Armstrong,* 144.

The golden light of conscience should shine in every chamber of the soul.

David's repentance

a Ps. xxxii., li.

b "The death of the soul is certainly meant, as in Eze. xviii."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 13. *W. Reading,* ii. 359; *Abp. Secker,* ii. 289; *A. Townson,* 75; *W. Richardson,* ii. 239; *H. Thompson, Davidica,* 110; *C. Simeon,* iii. 269; *C. Marriott,* ii. 352; *C. Bradley,* 366, *Bp. Hebert,* ii. 96; *Hon. G. C. Perceval,* iii. 126; *A. Williams,* iii. 137; *A. Roberts,* ii. 110.

v. 14. *H. Thompson, Davidica,* 127.

c J. Chandler.

If you have great corruptions within, you need

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great care and great grace to keep them under.

him which person in the Old Testament he would rather have been, had it been left to his choice. He replied, 'David.' 'Why David, rather than Solomon whose reign was so glorious?' 'We have evidence of David's repentance,' said the lad; 'but I don't find anything in the Bible that enables me to draw the same satisfactory conclusion concerning the repentance of Solomon.'"

death of Bathsheba's child

15—18. (15) **struck,** with a fatal disease. (16) **besought God,** not only bec. he was a man of warm family affections, but also bec. the suffering child was actually bearing the punishment of his sin. **elders,** *etc.*, the custom in the East is to leave a bereaved person to his grief for two or three days, then go and persuade him to eat, bathe, and change his garments.[a] (18) **vex himself,** with still greater grief.

The fear of bereavement a call to extraordinary prayer (*v.* 16).—I. The occasion of the sudden alarm in the case before us: David's sin, and God's sentence against him. II. The feelings proper to such a crisis of our lives. 1. Search for sin; 2. Humiliation before God after sin's discovery; 3. Prayer for deliverance. III. The manner in which we should draw nigh unto God. Note David's solitary prayer; his fasting; his prostration of person on the ground; his long continuance in all these expressions of fear, sorrow, and shame.[b]

David mourning (*v.* 20).—"The practice of the East is to leave a relation of the deceased person to weep and mourn, till, on the third or fourth day at farthest, the relations and friends go to see him, cause him to eat, lead him to a bath, and cause him to put on new vestments, he having before thrown himself on the ground, etc."[c]—The surprise of David's servants, then, who had seen his bitter anguish while the child was sick, arose apparently from this; that, when he found it was dead, he that so deeply lamented, arose of himself from the earth, without staying for his friends coming about him, and that presently; immediately bathed and anointed himself, instead of appearing as a mourner; and, after worshipping God with solemnity, returned to his wonted repasts, without any interposition of others; which as now, so perhaps anciently, was made use of in the East. The extremity of his sorrow for the child's illness, and his not observing the common forms of grief afterwards, was what surprised his servants. Every eye must see the general ground of astonishment; but this passage of Chardin gives great distinctness to our apprehensions of it.[d]

David's grief

19—23. (19) **whispered,** persuading one another to undertake to tell him. (20) **arose,** of his own accord; without needing persuasions. Now he would acknowledge the just judgment of God. (21) David, by his act, showed how much more sad *sin* is than *death*. (22, 23) While there was life, there was hope of recovery; when he was dead, there was the higher hope of reunion. *Prayer* was the duty while he lingered; *submission,* the duty when he was dead.[a]

I shall go to him (*v.* 23).—Here are four doctrines in five words. I. Infant salvation: "I shall go to him." II. Personal recognition in the future state: "to him." III. Personal assurance: "I." IV. Final perseverance of saints: "shall."[b]—*A father's thought over his child's grave* (*v.* 23).—The context shows David's—(1) Suffering as a sinner; 2. Reasoning as a saint. The text

a Jamieson.

"It will help bereaved parents, however, to dry up their tears, to consider that their little ones do not cease to *be*, though they cease to *breathe*. They are taken away, but God took them. They are better where they *are* than where they were. Though they be not in *their* bosoms, they are in Christ's." — *Flavel.*

b C. Herbert, M.A.

c Sir J. Chardin.

Sin, all sin, is fruitless; it blossoms fair, but always deceives. "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?"

It is an attribute of Deity to hate sin, and love the sinner.

d Harmer.

a "His expression, *v.* 23, indicates that through all his lapses into savage cruelty, and reckless self-indulgence, there still remained a fountain of feeling within, as fresh and pure as when he fed his father's flocks, and won the

b A father's thought over his child's grave.—(1) Suffering as a sinner; 2. Reasoning as a saint. The text

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love of Jonathan."—*Stanley.*

implies his belief in—I. The unreturnableness of the dead: "he shall not return to me." There is no returning—1. To discharge neglected duties: duties in relation to our children, our servants, our neighbours, our country; 2. To recover lost opportunities: lost Sabbaths, lost sermons, lost means of grace. If there is no return to the earth, then—(1) How foolish to set our hearts upon it; (2) How important to finish its work as we go on. II. The certainty of his own dissolution: "I shall go to him." The certainty of death is—1. Universally admitted with the understanding: no room left for questioning it; 2. Universally denied by the life: all men live as if they were immortal. III. The reunion after death: "I shall go to him." The reunion he believed in was—1. Spiritual: there would be no consolation in the thought of merely going to his grave, and the mingling of their dust together; 2. Conscious; they would feel themselves together; doctrine of recognition in heaven may be argued by the laws of mental association, the benevolence of God, and the allusions of Scripture; 3. Happy: he believed that his child was—(1) Happy; (2) Safe.[c]

Influence of the dead (*v.* 23).—In the deepening twilight of a summer evening, a pastor called at the residence of one of his parishioners, and found, seated in the doorway, a little boy with both hands extended upwards, holding a line. "What are you doing here, my little friend?" inquired the minister. "Flying my kite, sir," was the prompt reply. "Flying your kite!" exclaimed the pastor; "I can see no kite: you can see none?" "I know it, sir," responded the lad; "I cannot see it, but I know it is there, for I feel it pull." A few years back, the angels came and bore far above us, out of our sight, one that was very dear to us. The attachment of our hearts was not broken—the connecting ties were lengthened, not broken. We loved her while here; we love her still. She loved us while in the flesh; we are sure that she loves us none the less in her new condition. Rising higher and still higher in the heaven of heavens, we feel her influence. She is with Christ; and, attracted by gentle influences, we are tending towards her peaceful home, with the prospect of the same glorious companionship.[d]

vv. 21—23. *Dr. S. Corr*, iv. 287; *E. Thompson*, 59.

v. 23. *Mellan. Ss. for Chil.* iii. 173; *Dr. S Corr*, 260; *W. Jay, Short Disc.* iii. 51; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 376; *Dr. G. Townsend, Ss.* 19; *J. Wesley*, vii. 463; *J. Gaskin*, 294; *A. Williams*, ii. 113; *J. Cawood*, i. 103; *W. Nind*, i. 200.

b J. Gray.

c Dr. Thomas.

"As fate is inexorable, and not to be moved either with tears or reproaches, an excess of sorrow is as foolish as profuse laughter, while, on the other hand, not to mourn at all is insensibility."—*Seneca.*

Godly sorrow is better than worldly joy.

d Evang. Mag

24, 25. (24) **Solomon,** Heb. Shelomoh, *peaceable;*[a] a symbol of peace bet. David and Jehovah, and of peace in Dav.'s own conscience. (25) **Jedidiah,** *beloved of the Lord.* A name not intended to supersede that of Solomon, but signifying that he would be the object of special Divine favours.

birth of Solomon

a Gesenius. LXX. has *Salomon.*

The child Solomon (*v.* 24).—The Lord loved Him. I. How this must have humbled David; that, being so great a sinner, God should be so merciful. II. How this must have rejoiced David's heart, that he had a son whom God loved. III. How this may teach children that the child whom God loves is peaceable; and such is a true Jedidiah—the beloved of the Lord.

"Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms, and opens wide his blue eyes upon thine, to hail his father; while his little form flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not of pain! the childless cherubs well might envy thee the pleasures of a parent!"—*Byron.*

Description of a child.—

O thou bright thing, fresh from the hand of God,
The motions of thy dancing limbs are swayed
By the unceasing music of thy being!
Nearer I seem to God when looking on thee.
'Tis ages since He made His youngest star,
His hand was on thee as 'twere yesterday.

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b Smith.

David takes Rabbah

a Ewald.

b Spk. Com.

c "Crowns are only used in the E. on great state occasions, and they are generally of such weight that they cannot be borne without great inconvenience. Sometimes these ponderous crowns were suspended over the head, or attached to the top of the throne."—*Kitto.*

v. 31. *De Davidis Crudelitate Crit. Sac. Thes. Nov.* i. 664.

d Dr. Cumming.

Thou later revelation! Silver stream,
Breaking with laughter from the lake Divine,
Whence all things flow! O bright and singing babe,
What wilt thou be hereafter![b]

26—31. (26) This resumes the narrative from ch. xi. The siege may have taken two years; but very possibly all was over before Bathsheba's child was born. (27) **city of waters,** the lower city, situate on a small river,[a] the Moiet. or upper Jabbok. (28) **after my name,** as its conqueror. Another effort of Joab's to secure influence over David, (29) **all the people,** a new and unwearied force. (30) **kings's crown,** poss. the idol *Malcam* is meant.[b] **weight,**[c] as no person could wear such a crown, it is suggested that this means *value.* (31) This is usually supposed to mean to put to death by torture. The conduct of the Ammonites, and the stubborn resistance they offered, may, if that be the meaning, partly explain such cruelty.

Meaning of the Hebrew word "beth" (v. 31).—The infidel Paine has scornfully asked, "Is this the inspiration of God? Was David acting according to the suggestions of Him who is supposed to be wise and merciful, when he thus tortured and destroyed hundreds of human beings?" Now some will be surprised to learn that the Hebrew word *beth,* which is here translated "under," does not mean "under" (that is, placed beneath), but means "to" (in the sense in which we say in ordinary language, "I put him to the plough"); the literal meaning is, that he put them to saws, and to harrows, and to axes, and to the making of bricks—that he made them perpetual working slaves. There is no warrant whatever for the construction that he destroyed them by saws, and harrows, and axes, or inhumanly forced them into the furnace of the brick-kiln. He simply set them to a laborious drudgery.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

B.C. *cir.* 1032.

Amnon and Tamar

a "He was a man of very violent and insolent disposition; a character which is often found in the first-born sons of families such as Davids. He was still further corrupted by the low cunning of Jonadab, who was ready to truckle to the eldest born."—*Ewald.* See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.; R. W. Evans, Script. Biog* i.

b Roberts.

1—5. (1) Absalom and Tamar were children of Dav.'s most nobly born wife, Maachah, daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. *Amnon,*[a] was Dav.'s eldest son by Ahinoam of Jezreel. (2) **a virgin,** so dwelt secluded in a separate house, or part of the palace, to wh. Amnon had no means of access. (3) **Shimeah,** or Shamma. **subtil,** wise, with idea of crafty, almost unscrupulous. (4) **lean,** thin, pining, evidently fretting thyself ill. (5) **father cometh,** wh. they knew he would do in his paternal affection.

Feigning sickness (v. 5).—The Asiatics are certainly the most expert creatures I have seen at feigning themselves sick. Thus those who wish to get off work, or any duty, complain they have a pain here, and another there: they affect to pant for breath, roll their eyes as if in agony; and, should you touch them, they shriek out as if you were killing them. The sepoys, and those who are servants in the government offices, give great trouble to their superiors by ever and anon complaining they are sick; and it requires great discernment to find out whether they are so, or merely affecting it. Their general object is either to attend a marriage, or some religious festival.[b]

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Tamar makes cakes for Amnon

6–10. (6) **made,** shammed being sick. **couple of cakes,**[a] for baking such Tamar was noted. The wretch made out that he had no appetite, but thought he could eat some of his sister's cakes. (7) **meat,** food. (8) **bake,** or boil, over kind of charcoal stove in the room. (9) **refused to eat,** prob. bec. brought to him by a servant. (10) He wanted Tamar to bring them herself.

Fires and cooking in the East.—In the most considerable houses of Persia, they kindle their fires, not under a chimney, as is usual with us in fireplaces, but in a kind of oven called tinnor, about two palms from the ground, formed of a vase of burnt clay, in which they place burning coals, charcoal, or other combustible matter. The smoke from the coals is conveyed by means of a pipe from the oven under ground ; and by means of another, communicating with the grated bottom of the fire, it is supplied with air. Here they cook their meat and can bake their cakes on a flat sheet of iron laid over the tinnor, in little more than an instant of time. When the oven is not thus used, they place a plank over it in the shape of a small table, which they cover entirely, spreading over it a large cloth which extends on all sides to the ground, over a part of the floor of the chamber. By this contrivance, the heat being prevented from diffusing itself all at once, it is communicated insensibly and so pleasantly throughout the whole apartment that it cannot be better compared than to the effect of a stove. Persons at their meals, or in conversation, and some even sleeping, lie on the carpets round this table, supporting themselves against the walls of the apartment on cushions kept for the purpose, which likewise serve for seats in this country, the tinnor being so placed as to be equally distant from the sides of the room. Thus circumstanced, those to whom the cold is not unpleasant, put their legs under the cloth : others, who feel it more sensibly, their hands and the rest of their body. By bringing their extremities thus towards the central fire, they receive thence a mild and penetrating warmth, which diffuses itself agreeably over their whole body, without any injury to the head.[b]

a Ge. xviii. 6.

Amnon "was *ceteris in vitium flecti*, easily drawn to do evil. He answered Jonadab, upon the matter, as Tiberius did Justinus, 'I am only thy clay and wax' Oh that we could find men so docile and ductile to that which is good!"—*Trapp.*

"Chaste as the icicle that's curdled by the frost from purest snow, and hangs on Dian's temple."—*Shakespeare.*

"She's chaste as the fanned snow twice bolted o'er by the black northern blasts."—*Lee.*

"It is no sin not to understand a dark text, but it is a great sin not to believe a clear one."—*Horseley.*

b *Burder.*

11–14. (11, 12) **force,**[a] or humble me. Her relationship should have preserved her from his insults.[b] (13) **speak unto the king,**[c] urging this as a last plea. He might gain honourably what he tried to force. (14) In no way did she consent to his wicked deed.[d]

the rape of Tamar

a Ge. xxxix. 12.

b Ge. xxxiv. 7; Jud. xix. 23, and xx. 6.

c Lev. xviii. 9—11.

d De. xxii. 25; 1 S. xii. 11.

The plea of outraged innocence (*v.* 13).—I. The fate of the seduced. No hiding-place for shame : save perchance the dark-flowing river. This still the fate of fallen woman. II. The fate of the seducer. To be a fool in Israel. Incest still denounced as of all unnatural offences the most monstrous. But in ordinary cases of seduction is society quite fair to the offending parties? Is not the seducer too often countenanced while the seduced is hounded out of existence? How often the one flutters in the brawing-room in the light of beauty's smile while the other lies in the deep pool somewhere, or betakes herself to the street! Let the seducer be evermore counted a fool in Israel.

"Make my breast transparent as pure crystal, that the world, jealous of me, may see the foulest thought my heart does hold."—*Buckingham.*

A king's daughter preparing food.—Let it not appear strange that a king's daughter in the reign of David was employed in this menial service ; for Dr. Russel says the Eastern ladies often prepare cakes and other things in their own apartments ; and

"Chaster than

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the crystal of the Scythian cliffs, the more the proud winds court it, still the purer." — *Beaumont.*

"The soul whose bosom lust did never touch, is God's fair bride; and maidens' souls are such." — *Decker.*

"There is no respect of persons with God;" for there is nothing in one person more than another to form a ground of respect. "All have sinned and come short of His glory."

e Paxton.

some few particular dishes are cooked by themselves, but not in their apartments: on such occasions they go to some room near the kitchen. The Eastern bread is made in small, thin, moist cakes: it must be eaten new, and is unfit for use when kept longer than a day. Both Russel and Rauwolf, however, mention several kinds of bread and cakes; some which are done with yolks of eggs; some which are mixed with coriander and other seeds; and some which are strewed with them: and Pitts describes a kind of biscuits, which the Mohammedan pilgrims carry from Egypt to Mecca, and back again perfectly fresh and good. The Holy Scriptures accord with the narratives of modern travellers, in representing the Oriental loaves as very small, three of them being required for the repast of a single person: "Which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?" It appears also from the history of Abraham, and particularly from his entertaining the three angels, that they were generally eaten new and baked as they were needed. Sometimes, however, they were made to keep several days; for the shew-bread might be eaten after it had stood a week before the Lord. The pretence of the Gibeonites, that their bread had become mouldy from the length of the road, although it was taken fresh from the oven when they left home, proves that bread for a journey was made to keep a considerable time. In every one of those minute circumstances, the sacred volume perfectly corresponds with the statements of modern travellers.[e]

Tamar scorned by Amnon

15—18. (15) **hated her,** prob. he had been led on by his guilty passion beyond his first intention; and now, fearing the consequences, hated her who had so fascinated him. (16) The least he could now do was to acknowledge his wrong, and protect his sister; instead he refuses, and turns her out. **no cause,** or reason for this greater evil. (17) Amnon's must have been a brutal nature. (18) **garment,** *etc.*, or a *tunic with sleeves.*[a]

Amnon and Tamar (*v.* 15.)—I. The love of the ungodly. 1. The criminality of that which is evil. Like Amnon's love, exceedingly ardent; but selfish, cruel and impious; 2. The deficiency of that which is good. If love spring merely from the natural affections, it is defective in—(1) Its foundation; (2) Its exercise; (3) Its continuance. II. The hatred of the unjust. We hate those whom we have injured, because—1. We have lowered ourselves in their esteem; 2. We have enabled them to lower us in the estimation of others. 3. We conceive them to be our enemies. Learn:—See the importance of—(1) Cultivating a religious principle; (2) Associating with pious friends; (3) Setting a good example. Amnon would think of David and Bathsheba.[b]

Eastern servants (*v.* 17).—Eastern masters do not keep their servants at the distance usual in England. The affairs of the family, the news of the day, and the little incidents of life, are mutually discussed, as by equals. The difference between them, in reference to property, is sometimes not great; the master has perhaps, his small family estate, or some business which produces a little profit, and the servant is content with his rice, and a scanty cloth for his loins. No native who can afford it is without his servant, and many who can scarcely procure food for themselves, talk very largely about their domestics. See my

a "The rending the robe, wh. was the particular distinction of the king's *virgin* daughters, had a meaning beyond the mere ordinary significance of mourning."—*Kitto.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 18. "The native cloth in Sarmon, particularly that which is worn by young women of rank, is coloured after a fashion in spots, stripes, circles, triangles, and other figures, laid on with the thumb, or some other rude substitute for a brush. Red, black, brown, white, and yellow, are the prevailing colours."—*Turner.*

lord seated in his verandah, chewing his betel, and cogitating on his plans: hear him at every interval say to his attendant, "What think you of that?" "Shall I succeed?" "You must assist me; I know you have great sense: let this prosper, and you shall have rings for your ears, and a turban for your head. Good: pour water on me." They go to the well, and the servant bales about a hogshead of water on his master's head. They go to the house, and then the command is, "Rub my joints and limbs." "Ah! bring my rice and curry." That finished, "Bring water to wash my mouth; pour it on my hands: a shroot and fire bring; fetch my sandals, my turban, umbrella, and betel-box. Let us depart." Then may be seen the master stepping out with a lordly air, and the domestic at his heels, giving advice, or listening to his master's tales.[c]

19—22. (19) **on her head,**[a] to hold on the ashes.[b] (20) **hold thy peace,** from requiring to have Amnon punished. Absalom intended to take the judgment into his own hands. (21) **very wroth,** yet he did nothing. (22) **good nor bad,**[c] seemed to take no notice of the affair, in order to lead his brother into a false security.

The seducer's fate (*vv.* 21, 22).—Amnon incurred—I. His father's anger. Did David's remembered guilt prevent him being more than angry? or did the affection of the father limit the authority of the judge? II. His brother's contempt. The contempt of a vain, heartless man. Capable of much evil himself, even he resented this sin of his brother. Even the natural conscience of bad men will sometimes cry out against the sin of others. III. How much more will the righteous God be wroth with, and pour contempt upon the evil-doer!

Retribution.—One cannot help observing here, how David's adultery with Bathsheba was punished by his son's incest with his sister Tamar; and as he now saw the threatenings of God by Nathan beginning to take place, he had too much reason to fear they would be all of them executed to the full. It was a circumstance also that must greatly affect him, that he had been, though unwillingly, a sort of accessory to Amnon's crime, by yielding so readily to Amnon's desire of having his sister sent to him; the very proposal he made of her dressing and receiving his food from her seeming enough to create some suspicion in David that he had some design upon Tamar, which he ought to have been peculiarly careful to guard against. But probably Amnon had never offended him, nor given any occasion to suspect him capable of so heinous a crime as he was now meditating, and therefore David more easily consented that his sister should have the liberty of attending him.[d]

23—27. (23) **sheep-shearers,** always a time of feasting.[a] **Baal-hazor,** either *Tell Asur*,[b] 5 m. N.E. of Bethel; or Hazor in Benjamin.[c] (24) **Invitation to the king was given to disarm all suspicion.** (25) **chargeable,** put you to a needless expense. (26) **why should he,** David expected some secret enmity, and feared to let Amnon go. (27) Amnon is mentioned as eldest son, and acc. of Absalom's intended revenge.

The treacherous feast.—I. Who gave it? Absalom: a prince royal. Brother of the invited. Suspicion of wrong disarmed. II. To whom given? The royal family. No evil intended since

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To deny that you are a lost sinner is, in effect, to reject God's mercy.

"To live long, it is necessary to live slowly." — *Cicero.*

c Roberts.

Amnon hated by Absalom

a Jos. vii. 6; Job ii. 12.

b Jer. ii. 37.

c Ge. xxiv. 50, xxxi. 24.

"Frowning they went; his eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down their red and angry beams; as if his sight would, like the raging dog-star, scorch the earth, and kindle rivers in its course."—*Congreve.*

"Anger is a transient hatred; or, at least, very like it."—*South.*

Anger and hate hinder good counsel.

d Chandler.

Absalom's feast

a 1 Sa. xxv. 2.

b Wordsworth, Robinson.

c Ne. xi. 33.

"It is the over-curious ambition of many to be best or to be

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none; if they may not do so well as they would, they will not do so well as they may. I will do my best to do the best, and what I want in power, supply in will. Thus, while I pay in part, I shall not be a debtor for all. He owes most that pays nothing." — *A. Warwick.*

"Where ambition can be so happy as to cover its enterprises, even to the person himself, under the appearance of principle, it is the most incurable and inflexible of all human passions."—*Hume.*

d Kitto.

death Amnon

a "The Syrian mules are in activity, strength, and capabilities, far superior to ours."—*Jamieson.*

b 2 S. i. 11, xii. 16.

v. 28. *H. Lindsay, Lec.* ii. 146.

Mule. This the first mention of it in Scrip. The meaning of Ge. xxxvi. 24 is doubtful. Breeding of mules forbidden to Jews: but their use was looked upon as lawful. From Deut. xvii. 6 it appears that the king would not use the horse.

Human nature, under the power of corruption, is like a swollen river, which can hardly be kept within its banks.

the king himself was invited. III. What was the occasion? A sheep-shearing. Time of great rejoicing: nothing would be permitted to mar the festivities. IV. Who went to it? The king's sons—and Amnon. V. Who stayed away? The king. Why? did he suspect some dark design? Learn:—Let those who accept invitations to costly entertainments be sure the King goes with them.

Royal feasts in the olden time (*v.* 25).—David's declining to attend Absalom's feast on account of the expense which would thus be occasioned to his son, is the first instance history offers of the ruinous cost of royal visits to those who are honoured with them. A comparatively modern instance of this is given in *Notes and Queries* for October, 1850. It is stated that the decay of the Hoghton family is locally ascribed to the visit of King James I. to Hoghton Tower, near Blackburn, Lancashire; the following characteristic anecdote being cited in corroboration of the current opinion:—"During one of his hunting excursions, the king is said to have left his attendants for a short time, in order to examine a numerous herd of horned cattle, then grazing in what are now termed bullock pastures, most of which had probably been provided for the occasion. A day or two afterwards, being hunting in the same locality, he made inquiry respecting the cattle, and was told in no good-humoured way, by a herdsman unacquainted with his person, that they were all gone to feed the beastly king and his gluttonous company. The king exclaimed, as he left the herdsman, 'Then 'tis e'en time for me to gang too;' and accordingly, on the following morning he set out for Lathom House."[d]

28—31. (28) **I say unto you,** appointing some signal. They would have Amnon at advantage. He would not be able to defend himself. (29) **upon his mule,**[a] usual beast for riding in that age. Each son had a royal mule. (30) **tidings came,** faster than the galloping mules. Obs. usual exaggeration of reports. (31) Signs of wild and desperate grief.[b]

Ill news flies fast (*v.* 30).—From this exaggerated statement we learn—I. That bad news flies fast—in this case it outstripped the living sons. II. That the thing reported is apt to be worse than the truth. III. That when ill news reaches us we had better wait for the next messenger. IV. It may be a comfort to us that when we have heard the first we have heard the worst. V. No news is good news; for if there was ill news it would have reached us. VI. We deserved to hear only badness from heaven, but the message is called the Gospel—good tidings.

Tearing the garments (*v.* 31).—The custom of tearing the garments, and throwing dust upon the head, is very ancient, and is often mentioned in the Scriptures. See Ezr. ix. 3; Job i. 20; Nu. xiv. 6; Ecc. iii. 7; Joel ii. 13. Jacob, Joshua, David, and Hezekiah are mentioned as having done so: Ge. xxxvii. 34; Jos. vii. 6; 2 Ki. xix. 1. Although the high priest was forbidden to rend his clothes (Le. x. 16, xxi. 10), we find it was done when blasphemy was imputed to our Lord (Ma. xxvi. 65); the Apostles also did the same when worship was offered unto them, Ac. xiv. 14. The garments of the high priest, referred to in the prohibition, were probably his sacred or pontifical vestments; while those mentioned by Matthew were, doubtless, the ordinary or judicial robes. This Jewish custom was ordinarily employed

as a symbol of grief or penitence, though it sometimes denoted indignation coupled with sorrow, Is. xxxvi. 22, xxxvii. 1; Ac. xiv. 14. It was performed in the following manner:—"They take a knife, and, holding the blade downwards, do give the upper garment a cut on the right side, and then rend it a hand's breadth. This is done for the five following relations, brother, sister, son, daughter or wife; but for father or mother, the rent is on the left side, and in all the garments, as coat, waistcoat, etc."[c]

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"Grief is a stone that bears one down, but two bear it lightly."—*W. Hauff.*

c Levi.

32—36. (32) Jonadab was keen enough to understand what had really happened; we cannot think he was privy to Ab.'s intention, seeing he was friend of Amnon. (33) **all the king's sons,**[a] as David suspected. (34) **kept the watch,** the usual sentry; or some one set specially to watch and bring tidings. (35) Jonadab truly guessed who the people were. (36) **wept very sore,** mostly in excitement of their own peril.

David told of the death of Amnon

a 2 S. xix. 19.

Absalom fled (*v.* 34).—This fact thrice repeated. I. He fled from his father's anger. II. He could not flee from his own conscience. III. He could not flee from God.—*Effect of joyful tidings* (*v.* 36).—I. David's grief so profound, that at sight of it his sons wept. How children would weep if they could only see their parents' sorrow on their account. II. David's joy at seeing them alive so great that he burst into tears. A joy equalled only by that of parents over the spiritual life of their children. (Ill., the father, in the parable of the prodigal son.)

v. 33. *W. Harris, Fun. Dis.* ii. 87.

"Be more afraid of secret sins than of open shame; lay this foundation sure, that there is mercy with Jesus Christ."—*Greenham.*

37—39. (37) **Talmai,** Absalom's grandfather; ch. xiii. 3. (38) **three years,**[a] waiting any changes that might work for his restoration. (39) **longed to go forth,** *lit.* was consumed in going forth, with a sense of disappointed hope.[b]

flight of Absalom

a 2 S. xiv. 23, 32, xv. 8.

b Ps. lxxxiv. 2; Ge. xxxviii. 12.

A father mourning his absent son (*v.* 39).—I. The presence and filial conduct of the rest could not comfort David, or compensate for the absence of Absalom. II. The great sin of Absalom did not exclude him from his father's love. III. Like as a father pitieth his children, etc.

The word "longed," (*v.* 39).—The Hebrew has for longed, "was consumed." A person labouring under an intense desire for the possession of an object, says, "My soul is consumed for it," meaning that his spirit is wasting away by the intensity of his wishes. "My life is burning away through fear." "My spirit pitieth is consuming for his safety."[c]

Those who in the day of sorrow have owned God's presence in the cloud, will find Him also in the pillar of fire, brightening and cheering the abode as night comes on.

c Roberts.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

B.C. 1027.

1—4. (1) **perceived,** Joab was ever on the watch to find out how he could manage the king. "He ever appears wily, politic, and unscrupulous." (2) **Tekoah,** mod. *Tekua*; 6 miles S. of Bethlehem.[a] The appearance of the mourner was intended to excite David's interest. (3) **put the words,** dictated what she should say.[b] (4) **king,** who personally acted as a judge. **help,** marg. *save;* give a judgment; render me aid.

the wise woman of Tekoah

a "The rough, wild district was well suited for the lawless profession of the wise woman; it abounds in caves, as does the country near Endor."—*Spk. Com.*

Help, O king! (*v.* 4, see margin).—Save. I. We all need salvation. II. Salvation is provided for all. III. Only the King can save us. IV. Prayer is the way to secure salvation.

Anointing with oil (*v.* 2).—It is a curious fact that the Hindoos

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b "The object was to make David say that, in some cases, even a murderer's life might be spared."—*Jamieson.*

v. 4. *Dr. H. Hughes. Fem. Cha.* ii. 232.

c Roberts.

David promises to protect her

a 2 S. xii. 1.

b Nu. xxxv. 19; De. xix. 12.

Joab "is the personification of worldly policy, and secular expediency, and temporal ambition eager for its own personal aggrandisement, and especially for the maintenance of its own political ascendency, and practising on the weaknesses of princes for its own self-interests; but, at last, the victim of its own machiavellian shrewdness." — *Wordsworth.*

c Roberts.

she continues her address

a Ge. xxvii. 13; 1 S. xxv. 24; Ma. xxvii. 25.

b Nu. xxxv. 19.

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions!" — *Shakespeare.*

"Every one can master a grief but he that has it."—*Shakespeare.*

do not put on what is called mourning at the death of their friends. The relations take off their ear-rings and other ornaments, and neglect the dressing of their hair. A woman, on the death of her husband, takes off the thali (equivalent to the marriage ring) from her neck; and formerly she used to shave her head; but in all other respects she dresses as before. Those who are sick, as they suppose, under the influence of Saturn, generally wear something black, or have marks of that colour on their clothes, as they believe the indisposition is in this way removed.[c]

5—8. (5) As a widow, she immediately gained notice,[a] (6) **strove together,** in a quarrel. (7) **whole family,**[b] the relatives; intended here to indicate that all the king's sons were bitter against Absalom. **my coal,** fig. of a fire which may be brightened again, if one coal is left alight. (8) **give charge,** intimating that the response to her wish would be favourable, but gaining time for fuller inquiry.

The widow's one coal (*v.* 7).—I. Under this figure we have a picture of utter desolation: a poor widow in the winter of adversity. The warmth and light of her dwelling dependent on one coal: it might kindle more. II. A picture of the world's heartlessness; which, under the name of justice, would extinguish the last hope of the poor. III. An illustration of Divine care of the poor and needy, *see v.* 8.

Quenching coal (*v.* 7).—So said the woman of Tekoah, who went with a fictitious story to David, in order to induce him to recall Absalom. She affected to be a widow, and said that one of her sons had killed the other, and that now the family demanded his life as an atonement for that of his brother; and she said, if they succeeded they would "quench her coal." But the life is sometimes called the "light" (ch. xxi. 17), which in the margin is translated "candle, or lamp." Both the comparisons include the idea of fire. Children, in Ceylon, are not called "coals," but "sparks." It is said of a man who has a large family, "He has plenty of *porrekal*" (sparks). Those who are favoured with fine children are said to have "large sparks." Of those whose children are all dead, "Alas! their sparks are quenched." To a person who is injuring an only child it is said, "Ah, leave him alone; he is the only spark."[c]

9—12. (9) **be on me,**[a] the cunning woman intends to get a more direct answer, so seems as if she could not bear that on David should rest the guilt of neglecting to punish bloodshed. (10) A promise of direct royal protection. (11) This is another point; not only is she relieved of the guilt of neglecting to avenge her murdered son, but also secures for the murderer public protection from the *goel*, or family avenger.[b] (12) She has by this time quite gained David's ear.

On obtaining promises (*v.* 11).—I. Professing to have had one son who had murdered another: the family of the murdered sought justice. II. Out of pity for the widow, David sets justice on one side, and so spares the murderer. III. But how, then, can he punish the murderer Absalom? In laying down a rule for others, we may be applying principles from which we ourselves would gladly escape; or, on the contrary, those from which we ourselves might be comforted.

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13–17. (13)[a] A practical application, like that of Nathan; but without his prophetic force, ch. xii. 7. **faulty**, *i.e.* "your decision in favour of my son condemns your own conduct towards Absalom." (14)[b] Her argument is, that as God has spared Absalom, the king may surely show restoring kindness to him.[c] (15) **people . . afraid**, her relatives, as *v.* 7; she still keeps up her deceptive story. (16) She is urging, by showing the confidence she had in his kindness. (17) **angel of God**, praising Dav.'s wisdom.

The exile's return (*v.* 14).—I. Our heavenly Father's banished ones. 1. They are voluntary exiles—(*a*) none are driven from God. (*b*) all are invited to return, (*c*) many refuse to do so; 2. They are guilty exiles—(*a*) in sinning against the Lord. (*b*) in departing from Him. (*c*) in refusing to return; 3. They are unhappy exiles—(*a*) alienated from their Father, (*b*) deceived by Satan. II. The means He hath devised for their return. 1. To satisfy the demands of justice—(*a*) that their crimes may be atoned for, (*b*) that their lost service be made up; 2. To overcome their own opposition—(*a*) their pride humbled by conviction, (*b*) hearts broken by love, (*c*) affections awakened by visions of home: 3. To insure their safe return, He prevents their being—(*a*) enticed back, (*b*) driven back, (*c*) falling back. He provides—(*a*) a sure guide—the Holy Spirit, (*b*) a safe convoy—the holy angels, (*c*) a certain supply—the covenant. Learn:—1. Admire our Father's goodness; 2. Return to Him with full purpose of heart.[d]

Oriental compliments (*v.* 17).—Thus did the woman of Tekoah compliment David, and thus did Mephibosheth address him when he had been slandered by Ziba. Great men are often compared to the messengers (the true meaning of angel) of the gods. Thus men of great wisdom or eloquence are said to be like the angels of the gods. "Ah! my lord, you know all things: you are one of the angels of the gods." Sometimes the person will not address you in a direct way, but speak as to a third person, loud enough for you to hear. "Ah! what wisdom he has; there is nothing concealed from him. Whence has he had his wisdom—from the gods? Yes, yes; all things are known to him." Then turning to you, they look humbly in your face and say: "My lord, there are only two for me: God is the first; but you are the second."[e]

18–20. (18) **answered, he saw thro' the plot now.** The fawning, flattering style of Joab was revealed. (19) Obs. that she cannot answer a straightforward yes or no. But she no longer dissembles, she speaks truth. (20) **fetch . . speech, to win this judgment in favour of the fratricide. wise,**[a] thus she praises David's wisdom, and so prevails over him.

Extravagant flattery of Orientals.—The compliments which they addressed to their princes, and the manner in which they spoke of them, were not less hyperbolical. The address of the wise woman of Tekoah to David furnishes a memorable example of the extravagant adulation in which they indulged, and which seems to have been received with entire satisfaction by one of the wisest and holiest of men. . . . Equally hyperbolical was the reply of a Persian grandee to Chardin who objected to the price which the king had set upon a pretty rich trinket: "Know that the kings of Persia have a general and full knowledge of mat-

she applies her case to David

a Ju. xx. 2.

b Job xxxiv. 15; He. ix. 27.

c Nu. xxxv 15, 25, 28.

v. 14. "The Jews throw out of the window all the water that is found in the house in which a person has died, believing that the soul has cleansed itself therein."—*J. Gadsby.*—But if the Jews do this they have probably another reason for it; as (1) to typify a life gone beyond recall; or (2) in reference to some Levitical precept, or old custom. See Nu. xix. 11—15.

d *The Study.*

"A good word is an easy obligation; but not to speak ill, requires only our silence, which costs us nothing."—*Tillotson.*

e *Roberts.*

David perceives she is from Joab

a *v.* 17. Ch. xix. 27.

"Every loving word that God speaks to us acts back again, and makes music in His heart. He never says with a scowl, 'Here comes that poor, limping sinner again.' The path of the sinner back to God is brighter and

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brighter all the way up to the smile of the face and the touch of the hand; and that is salvation."—*Beecher.*

"Whilst thou livest, keep a good tongue in thy head."—*Shakespeare.*

b Paxton.

David sends Joab for Absalom

a "Or Bath-sheba's influence may have been exerted to keep Absalom in disgrace for the sake of Solomon."—*Spk. Com.*

"How much more compassionate is our heavenly Father than the most tender-hearted of earthly parents; and how much the loving-kindness of God is magnified and manifested in this history!"—*Ambrose.*

"Anger is like the waves of a troubled sea; when it is corrected with a soft reply, as with a little strand, it retires, and leaves nothing behind but froth and shells—no permanent mischief."—*Bp. Taylor.*

b Roberts.

Absalom's beauty

v. 25. *Bochart, De Absalom Capillis. Geog. Sac.* ii. 853.

a Poll, a head. (Du. *bol*, whence *bolster*, O. *polster*, Sc. *pow.*) The

ters, as sure as it is extensive; and that equally in the greatest and in the smallest things, there is nothing more just and sure than what they pronounce." This incident admirably shows the strong prepossession of these Asiatics in favour of their kings, or rather of their own slavery; and gives some plausibility to the remark of Mr. Harmer, that there may be more of real persuasion in such addresses than we are ready to apprehend. In the estimation of the Persian courtier, the knowledge of his prince was like that of an angel of God. . . . The same remark applies, with little variation, to the woman of Tekoah; her design was to soothe the mind of her sovereign, to mitigate, and, if possible, to extinguish his just resentment of the atrocious murder which Absalom had committed, and procure the restoration of the fratricide to his country and the presence of his father.[b]

21—23. (21) **done this thing,** given this judgment; and, in consistency, must act according to it. (22) Joab intended to ingratiate himself with Absalom, who was looked upon as heir to the throne. (23) **and brought,** so showing his personal interest. (24) **not see my face,** perhaps Dav. could not trust himself to see his favourite son.[a] This was one of those half measures, full of danger, and working badly.

Half reconciled (*v.* 24).—"Let him not see my face."—I. Absalom an exile from his father for five years (three in Geshur. xiii. 38; and two in Jerusalem. *v.* 28). II. The tenderness of David to Absalom exceeded by that of God to David; for God (*a*) sent a message to David; (*b*) assured him pardon on his first sign of repentance. III. God is more kind to us than we are to each other.

Refusing to be seen (*v.* 24).—Few things are more offensive, in the East, than to refuse to show yourself to those who come to see you. Send your servant to say you are engaged, or that the individual may go, and he will be distressed, or enraged, and not hesitate to express his feelings. Should there, however, be any reason to hope, he will wait for hours at your door; nay, he will come day after day, till he shall have seen your face. They have an opinion, that if they once gain admission into your presence a great point is attained, and so it is; for what with their eloquence, and tears, and abject submissions, they seldom fail to make an impression. Even low people, who have no particular business, often call upon you, that they may be able to say that they have seen your face. When a person says he has not seen the face of the great man, it means that he has not gained his suit. See the high caste native passing along the road; an humble suppliant is there to attract his attention; and let him turn his face another way, and it is a dagger through the poor man's soul.[b]

25—27. (25) **beauty,** grace of form as well as of face. All David's children seem to have been remarkable for physical beauty. (26) **polled his head,**[a] pride of his hair led to this being done very seldom: only when the excessive length and weight became wearisome. **two hundred shekels,** about 3 lbs. 2 ozs. If they had been shekels of sanctuary, the weight would have been six pounds.[b] (27) **Tamar,** after his sister.

Handsome is that handsome does (*v.* 25).—I. The beauty of Absalom. Bodily, evanescent, only skin-deep. II. The praise

his beauty won—1. Shows how people are charmed by things of small value, appearances; 2. Suggests how Absalom may have been injured by adulation: 3. The beautiful have need to guard their hearts against the effects of thoughtless admiration: as the ill-favoured against envy. III. Seek the praise of God for beauty of heart and life.

A fine head of hair (*v.* 26).—The weight of the hair, which seems to be enormously great, is the first thing that occurs to the mind. Two hundred shekels, at two hundred and ninety grains each, make forty-three thousand and eight hundred grains. This is rather more than one hundred ounces avoirdupois, for four hundred and thirty-seven grains and a half are equal to such an ounce. It is a very good English head of hair, I am told, that weighs five ounces; if Absalom's then weighed one hundred ounces it was very extraordinary. Some very learned men, I think, have believed a royal shekel was but half the weight of the sacred shekel: be it so, yet fifty ounces, ten times the weight of a good British head of hair, seems to be too great an allowance. To suppose, as some have done, that adventitious matters, united with the hair, are to be taken in to make up the weight, seems to me not a little idle: what proof would this have been of his possessing an extraordinary fine head of hair, since it would be possible to attach to the hair of a man half bald, substances that should weigh one hundred ounces? Commentators then should by no means talk of the oil, the fragrant substances, the gold dust, with which they suppose the hair might be powdered, as making up this weight; they might as well have added ornaments of gold, ribands or what answered them, artificial tresses of hair, and all the matters that are now in different methods fastened to the hair; but would not this have been ridiculous? It is more reasonable to say, the present reading may be faulty, as in other cases there have frequently been mistakes in numbers; or that we were not sure what number of grains two hundred shekels, after the king's weight, was equal to; than to attempt to remove the difficulty by such an incompetent method. It was an uncommonly fine head of hair, of very unusual weight, which is all that we know with certainty about it.[c]

28—33. (28) **saw not,** *etc.*, a great restraint on Dav.'s part, but it seems to indicate that Dav. at this time was not much in public, and neglected his kingly duties. (29) **would not come,** perhaps Joab began to fear the manifest wilfulness and ambition of Absalom. (30) **near mine,** lit. *at my hand.* **on fire,** comp. Samson's trick.[a] (31) This made Joab go to Absalom. (32) **let . . face,** he knew well what influence Joab had. (33) **kissed,** in token of reconciliation.

Absalom.—David's family. Absalom's—1. Personal appearance: most beautiful person in Israel: tall, strong, agile—his hair; 2. His character—(1) Vain; (2) Cruel—Amnon; (3) Deceitful: kissed his father and plotted against him—Judas; (4) Revengeful: burned fields of corn; (5) Crafty: stole the hearts of the people; (6) Unnatural: conspired against his father; (7) Cowardly: ran away; 3. His end (xviii. 9): caught in an oak. Shot with arrows, cast into a pit. Learn—1. Handsome is that handsome does; 2. Virtue is true beauty; 3. Seek adornment of true piety.[b]

The Moravian and German officer (*v.* 30).—In one of the wars

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word survives in *poll*-tax, or head money, and the poll at elections, in which the voters are counted by their polls or head. To poll is to cut the hair of the head.

b Keil.

"I will not call vanity and affectation twins, because, more properly, vanity is the mother, and affectation is the darling daughter; vanity is the sin, and affectation is the punishment: the first may be called the root of self-love, the other the fruit. Vanity is never at its full growth, till it spreadeth into affectation; and then it is complete."—*Saville.*

"Beauty, without kindness, dies unenjoyed and undelighting."—*Johnson.*

c Harmer.

Absalom and David reconciled

a Ju. xv. 3—5.

v. 33. *H. Lindsay, Lec.* ii. 159.

"It is notable that nearly all the poisonous fungi are scarlet or speckled, and the wholesome ones brown or grey, as if to show us that things rising out of darkness and decay are always most deadly when they are well dressed."—*Ruskin.*

b The Hive.

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Every one knows that it would be far better to lose our feet than our head. Adam had feet to stand with, but we have lost them by his disobedience; yet glory be to God, we have found a Head, in whom we abide eternally secure, a Head which we shall never lose.

"How goodness heightens beauty!"—*Hannah More.*

in Germany, a captain of cavalry was ordered out on a foraging party. He put himself at the head of his troop, and marched to the quarter assigned him. It was a solitary valley, in which hardly anything but woods could be seen. In the midst of it stood a little cottage: on perceiving it he went up and knocked at the door; an ancient Hernhutter, with a beard silvered with age, came out. "Father," said the officer, "show me a field where I can set my troops a-foraging." "Presently," replied the Hernhutter. The good old man walked before, and conducted them out of the valley. After a quarter of an hour's march they found a fine field of barley. "This is the very thing we want," said the captain. "Have patience for a few minutes," replied the guide; "you shall be satisfied." They went on, and at the distance of about a quarter of a league further they arrived at another field of barley. The troop immediately dismounted, cut down the grain, trussed it up, and remounted. The officer then said to his conductor, "Father, you have given to yourself and us unnecessary trouble; the first field was much better than this." "Very true, sir," replied the good old man, "but it was not mine."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

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Absalom steals the hearts of the people

1—6. (1) **prepared,** *etc.*, assuming the state and equipage of a prince. **to run,** a kind of guard; *avant-couriers;* we call them *outriders.*[a] **horses,** this was a new and striking luxury:[b] a sign of pride and vainglory, intended to set Ab. in the thought of the people. (2) **way of the gate,** road leading to the gate, so as to talk to the people coming in for judgments. **controversy,** dispute over rights with a neighbour, etc. (3) **good,** he took care always to give favourable decisions.[c] (4) **judge,** he does not say king. (5) **kissed him,** in unusual condescension. (6) **stole,** by deceptive arts.[d]

Absalom's treachery (*vv.* 1—12).—Absalom was—I. An unfilial son. And not only unfilial, but ungrateful: David had but just now pardoned him. II. A mean-spirited hypocrite (*vv.* 4, 5, 7—9); cringing to the people, lying to the king. III. A disloyal subject. As a mere subject his crime was extremely great. IV. A cunning traitor.

Morning levées in the East (*v.* 2).—This shows that the judicial and other public business of the kings was despatched very early in the morning. The greatest sovereigns in the East rise at day-break, and after their morning devotions proceed immediately to the transaction of public business. Thus, in describing the duties of the King of Persia, Sir John Malcolm says: "At an early hour in the morning the principal ministers and secretaries attend the king, make reports upon what has occurred, and receive his commands. After this audience he proceeds to his public levée, which takes place almost every day, and continues about an hour and a half. At this levée, which is attended by the princes, ministers, and the officers of the court, all affairs which are wished to be made public are transacted; rewards are given, punishments commanded, and the king expresses aloud those sentiments of displeasure or approbation which he wishes to be promulgated." Such are the duties which, with little

[a] 1 Sa. viii. 11; 1 Ki. i. 5, xviii. 46.
[b] De. xvii. 16, 20.
[c] "There is, at first sight, a want of adequate motive for Absalom's design of depriving Dav. of his crown, seeing that he was now the eldest son, and so the heir. But it was not necessary that the eldest son should succeed, God would indicate to the father which of his sons He had chosen."—*Kitto.*
[d] "To flatter each litigant, to excite discontent against existing government, and to suggest a remedy by making him king, was Absalom's policy."—*S. k. Com.*
[e] Ps. x. 10; Ro xvi. 18. See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

variation, an Oriental king has discharged in the early morning, before in England persons of consideration usually leave their beds. This explains why Absalom was obliged to rise early when he wished to ingratiate himself with the persons who went to the morning levée to present their petitions, or to submit their cases to the king's determination.[e]

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"Ambition breaks the ties of blood, and forgets the obligations of gratitude."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

e *Dr. Kitto.*

7–12. (7) **forty,** should be *four.*[a] **in Hebron,**[b] where he was born (ch. iii. 3). (8) **serve the Lord,** with a great sacrifice. He took the 200 persons as guests for the sacrificial feast. (9) **go in peace,** the pious king suspected no evil in so simply religious an act. (10) **spies,** *lit.* runners on foot. **trumpet,** wh. would be sounded from place to place, at appointed stations.[c] (11) **simplicity,** as to sacrifice; poss. principal people of Jerus. By this device Absalom secures them fr. opposing his schemes. (12) **Gilonite,** of Giloh (Jos. xv. 51). Poss. he was alienated fr. Dav. on account of Bathsheba.[d]

Absalom feigns a vow

a *Syr.* and *Arab* vers. and *Josephus* have *four years.* This time may be reckoned fr. his return fr. Geshur.

"Some think the 40 years is correct, and gives the time in David's reign, dating from his unction by Samuel."—*Wordsworth.*

b "That the insurrection sprung into being at Hebron, the ancient capital of Judah, makes it certain that some discontent in Dav.'s own tribe here came into play."—*Ewald.*

c Comp. signalling by *beacon-fires.*

d *Blunt.*

Guileless first, guilty afterwards (*v.* 11).—I. An illustration of the arts of the demagogue. He makes, like Absalom, great professions of fidelity to his word, and to religion. II. An illustration of the ease with which the unreflecting mob may be led. Doubtless, these all thought they had some little right on their side. They knew not anything—(*a*) Of Absalom's purpose; (*b*) Of the disastrous consequences of rebellion.

Punishment of ingratitude (*vv.* 10—12).—A petted soldier of the Macedonian army was shipwrecked, and cast upon the shore apparently lifeless. A hospitable Macedonian discovered him, revived him, took him to his home, and treated him in a princely manner, and, when he departed, gave him money for his journey. The rescued soldier expressed warm thanks and promised royal bounty to his benefactor. Instead, when he came before Philip, he related his own misfortunes, and asked to be rewarded by the gift of the house and lands of his rescuer. His request was granted; and he returned and drove out his former host. The latter hastened to lay the true state of the case before the king; when he restored the lands, and caused the soldier to be branded in the forehead, "The Ungrateful Guest," as the reward of his baseness.

13–18. (13) **hearts,** as *v.* 6. (14) **flee,**[a] Dav. knew the quickness and energy of Absalom's action. Nothing but flight would secure safety. He also would avoid the horrors of a siege. David had no standing army, only his bodyguard. (16) **household,** including wives. **concubines,** secondary wives. Often foreign persons who could not be legal wives. (17) **far off,** lit. *the Far House,* a place so named.[b] (18) **Cherethites,** *etc.*, ch. viii. 18. **six hundred,** including the Gittites,[c] recruits from Gath.

David flees from Jerusalem

a "Recog. in this a punishment for his personal sin, according to Nathan's words, he felt he only, not his people, should be the sufferer.

b "Prob. last house in the suburbs; or a fort guarding the passage of the Kidron."—*Spk. Com.*

c 1 Sa. xxiii. 13, xxvii. 2.

The place of safety (*v.* 17).—David, in his flight from trouble, may remind us of those who, in their perplexities, seek places of refuge that seem safe: but may yet be far off from God. The surest refuge is the Lord, who is nigh to all that call upon Him.

Cherethites and Pelethites (*v.* 18).—These Cherethites and Pelethites were the life-guards of King David (2 Sa. viii. 18, xx. 7, 23; 1 Ki. i. 38, 44; 1 Ch. xviii. 17). • The titles are commonly said to signify "executioners and couriers." It is plain that these royal guards were employed as executioners (2 Ki. xi. 4), and as

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"Better to be despised for too anxious apprehensions, than ruined by too confident a security."—*Burke.*

d Smith's Dic. of Bib.

Ittai the Gittite

a Wordsworth.

"Ittai declared his resolution with a fervour wh. almost inevitably recalls a like profession made almost on the same spot to the great descendant f Dav. centuries afterwards. Matt. xxvi. 35."—*Stanley.*

b "Kidron, dark: prob. so-called fr. *Kadar,* to be dark; perhaps fr. the colour of its water; or of its bed in the rocky gorge of the valley of Jehoshaphat." — *Wordsworth.*

c Spurgeon.

"Great lords, by reason of their flatterers, are the first to know their own virtues, and the last to know their own vices: some are made ashamed by comparison, because their ancestors were so great; and others are ashamed of their ancestors, because they were so little."—*Seldon*

couriers (1 Ki. xiv. 27). Similarly, Potiphar was captain of the guard of Pharaoh, and also chief of the executioners (Ge. xxxvii. 36), as was Arioch, Nebuchadnezzar's officer (Da. ii. 14). In the latter part of David's reign the Cherethites and Pelethites were commanded by Benaiah (2 Sa. viii. 18, xx. 23, xxiii. 23). But it has been conjectured that the royal bodyguards may have been foreign mercenaries, like the Pope's Swiss guards. They are connected with the Gittites, a foreign tribe; and the Cherethites are mentioned as a nation (1 Sa. xxx. 14) dwelling apparently on the coast, and therefore probably Philistines, of which name Pelethites may be only another form.[d]

19—23. (19) **Ittai,** who had but recently joined him (*v.* 20). Or nothing more may be meant than that, being a foreigner, he should not share in these purely national troubles. **exile,** poss. a banished man, so it was too bad for him to leave trouble only to fall into trouble. (20) **whither I may,** uncertain where to find shelter. (21) "A noble answer of genuine loyalty."[a] (22) **pass over,** the Kidron.[b] (23) **the country,** the people who watched the departure. Crossing the brook was the signal of the king's intention to flee.

The brook Kidron (*v.* 23).—I. David passed over the brook when flying with his mourning company from his traitor son. II. The King of kings Himself was not favoured with a more cheerful or royal road. III. Notwithstanding the abasement of David, he yet returned in triumph to his city, and David's Lord arose victorious out of the grave. Let us then be of good courage, for we also shall win the day.[c]

David's popularity.—The best part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were firmly attached to him, and followed him in his retreat from the capital, and all the country through which he went, showed their affection to him by loud acclamations. The Cherethites and Pelethites, the Gittites, and the ablest of his officers, continued steadfast in their attachment to him, and followed his fortune. The tribes on the other side Jordan gladly received him, and the richest persons of that country supplied him and his forces with all necessary provisions, and he soon collected among them an army sufficient to check the rebels, and at one blow to crush the rebellion. And this was no sooner known, than the tribes in general were all in motion to show their loyalty to the king, and restore him to his throne and government. The truth is, that David was surprised unawares and unprovided, by a wicked and impious faction, who had, by their emissaries, drawn together a large body of men, wherever they could pick them up, among all the tribes; gaining over, probably, some well-minded persons, by lies and slanderous reports of the king's government, and such others as, in all nations, are always ready to enter into any measures of wickedness and violence, in hopes of making their advantage by the public confusion and calamity, by those methods which are constantly practised by profligate conspirators, in order to gratify their pride, ambition, and revenge, though at the expense of the religion, liberties, and prosperity of their country. And it is therefore no wonder that this rebellion, which was evidently contrary to the general sense and inclination of the people, was so suddenly suppressed, and David's restoration to his throne and government was immediately resolved on by the unanimous con-

sent of all the tribes of Israel; whereby God was graciously pleased to put an end to his troubles, bringing him in safety to his capital and palace, and preserving his life, till he happily settled the succession on Solomon his son, the wisest of princes, and the most prosperous monarch in the world.[d]

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[d] *Chandler.*

24–29. (24) **Zadok,** 2 Sa. viii. 17; 1 Chr. xii. 28. **Abiathar,** 1 Sa. xxii. 11—19, 20—23.[a] (25) **carry back,** Dav. was in the mood of entire submission to Div. judgment, and wished to bear it all alone. Moreover, he would not put the ark or the priests in peril. (26) Comp. Job i. 21, ii. 10. (27) **seer,** with some play on the word. "You can help me by watching events for me." (28) **certify,** inform me, assure me safety to return. (29) It is singular that Zadok's name should be put first.

Zadok the priest

[a] "There is a difference in the conduct of the rival priests wh. seems to indicate the different shades of their loyalty. Zadok remained by the ark; Abiathar went apart on the mountain side, apparently waiting to watch the stream of followers as it flowed past." — *Stanley.*

The trial-bearing force of spiritual religion (*vv.* 25, 26).—I. Spiritual religion engages the supreme attention of the soul under trial. I. Whatever subject has the most power to draw away the mind from itself, will always be effective in supporting it under trials; 2. Of all subjects, religion has the most power to draw away the mind from itself. II. Spiritual religion recognises God's superintendence under trial. David regarded the superintendence of God, as being—1. Personal; 2. Sovereign; 3. Adequate. III. Spiritual religion identifies man's will with God's under trial.[b]

vv. 25, 26. *W. Jay, Short Dis.* i. 240; *Homer* (of Cromond.), i.

Old Betty (*v.* 26).—Old Betty was converted late in life, and though very poor was very active. She visited the sick; out of her own poverty she gave to those who were still poorer; collected a little money from others when she could give none of her own, and told many a one of the love of the Saviour. At last she caught cold and rheumatism, and lay in bed month after month, pain-worn and helpless. A good minister went to see her, and asked if after her active habits she did not find the change very hard to bear. "No, sir, not at all. When I was well, I used to hear the Lord say day by day, 'Betty, go here; Betty, go there; Betty, do this; Betty, do that:' and I used to do it as well as I could: and now I hear Him say every day, 'Betty, lie still and cough.'"[c]

[b] *Dr. Thomas.*

"This barren verbiage current among men, light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment." — *Tennyson.*

[c] *Dr. J. Hamilton.*

30–37. (30) **head covered,** drew his cloak over.[a] **barefoot,** unsandalled; these both were signs of great grief.[b] (31) **Ahithophel,** his own trusted counsellor.[c] (32) **Archite,** Jos. xvi. 2. His official title was *King's Friend.*[d] On him too were signs of grief. He meant to accompany David. (33) **a burden,** bec. no warrior. (34) Dav. had the Heb. love of stratagem. The *cunning* of Hushai he now set against the wisdom of Ahithophel. (35) **with thee,** you will not be alone in appearing to have turned against the king. (36) **two sons.** noted as swift runners. (37) Absalom and the man who would ruin him entered the city nearly together.

Hushai the Archite

[a] *Stanley.*

[b] 2 Sa. xix. 4; Est. vi. 12; Je. xiv. 3, 4; Eze. xxiv. 17.

[c] Foll. Ps. seem to refer to this treachery, — lv., lxix., cix.

[d] "Hushai's conduct is certainly not the model of Christian uprightness."—*Stanley.*

v. 30. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 173.

David's submission to his afflictions (*v.* 30).—Consider—I. The circumstances in which he was placed; most afflictive. This will be seen if we view him as a king, as a man of humanity and piety. But they derived tenfold poignancy from the source whence they flowed: from his own subjects, his peculiar friend, his own son. II. His conduct under them. 1. Confidence in God's care; 2. Submission to His will.[e]

[e] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

The trials of God's children.—Ofttimes the Lord suffers His

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children to be tempted and brought into straits, in order that the hidden life within may be displayed, not so much to Himself as to their brethren and ourselves. So He shows to us an Abraham's faith, a Job's patience, a Moses' love, an Elijah's zeal, in order that we may praise His power, which is so mighty in the weak children of men. But are we desponding, and disposed to think that such saints might all reach heaven, while with us it will be otherwise? Then He sets before our eyes, here a David, and there a Simon Peter; grapes which, in the press of trial, yielded not wine merely, but also bitter drops of sin from their hearts. Such a sight makes us pluck up courage, especially when we learn that Simon was called "a rock," and David "a man after God's own heart."[f]

v. 31. *Dr T. Fuller, Joseph's Particoloured Coat.*

"When men take sinful means to avoid a calamity, that way very often brings it."—*Walt.*

[f] *Dr. Krummacher.*

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CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

Ziba's fraud

1—4. (1) **Ziba,** ch. ix. He was currying favour. **bunches of raisins,** masses of raisins pressed together like cheese. **summer fruits,** dried figs, or dates.[a] **bottle,** or skin. (2) **king's household,** not for the king. Ziba put his answer in this form according to Oriental politeness. (3) **thy master,** *i.e.* Saul. **son,** evidently grandson. **abideth,** Ziba more than hints that he was unloyal. (4) A *foolish* gift made in heat of temper, *unjust* also.

Ziba's falsehood (*vv.* 2—4).—I. An unscrupulous man lying for his own advantage. II. An unsuspicious man deceived by a plausible story. III. A liar obtaining a momentary advantage. IV. Liars should bear in mind that at the end of all temporary successes gained by falsehood they have to reckon with God.

David's conduct to Ziba explained.—Not the least material exception that objectors make to David's conduct, in this period of time, is his making a grant of Mephibosheth's estate to a perfidious servant without ever giving the master a fair hearing. But how could David have leisure to send for Mephibosheth from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and inquire into the merits of the cause depending between him and his servant, when he was in so great a hurry, and under flight from the arms of his rebel son? Or how could he suppose that Ziba could have dared to have told him so notorious a lie, when it might in a short time be disproved? Every circumstance, in short, on Ziba's side, looked well, but none on his master's. To his master, David had been extremely kind, in restoring him to the forfeited estate of his grandfather Saul, and in allowing him to eat at his own table, as one of the king's sons; and now, at the general rendezvous of his friends, David might well have expected that the person to whom he had extended so many favours, should not have been so negligent of his duty as to absent himself, unless it had been upon some extraordinary business; and therefore, when Ziba acquaints him with the occasion of his absence, though it was a mere fiction, yet with David it might find a readier credence because at this time he had reason to mistrust everybody; and seeing his own family disconcerted and broken, might think the crown liable to fall to any new claimant that could pretend to the same right of succession that Mephibosheth might.[b]

[a] "Cakes made of dates pressed together are still used as provisions for caravans."—*Wordsworth.*

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

"Hold! no adulation!—'tis the death of virtue! who flatters, is of all mankind the lowest, save him who courts the flattery."—*Hannah More.*

"Falser than the smiles of oblgrown tyrants, or the sea when with its smoothest brow it courts to death."—*Play, "Constant Nymph."*

"He who tells a lie is not sensible how great a task he undertakes; for he must be forced to invent twenty more to maintain one."—*Alexander Pope.*

[b] *Stackhouse.*

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5—8. (5) **Bahurim,** ch. iii. 16. **came forth,** fr. his house.[a] (6) **cast stones,** as for adulterer's punishment. (7) **come out,** to banishment. (8) **all the blood,** *etc.,* Shimei laid to Dav.'s charge the extinction of Saul's house. Perhaps events narrated ch. xxi. had occurred before this.

Shimei

a "It seems to have lain off the road, on a ridge separated fr. it by a narrow ravine running parallel to the road, so that Shimei was out of easy reach, though within hearing, and within a stone's throw."—*Spk. Com.*

"All the fury of the rival dynasties, with all the foul names that long feuds had engendered, burst forth as the two parties here came into collision."—*Stanley.*

v. 5. *R. Palmbele,* i. 211; *H. Lindsay,* ii. 186.

vv. 5—14. *J. Milner,* iii. 358.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c The Times.

David's patience and forbearance (*vv.* 5—12). To place David's conduct in its true light, consider. I. His heavy trial. (*a*) His condition independent of Shimei's conduct was exceedingly afflictive; (*b*) but the conduct of Shimei greatly aggravated his misfortunes at this time. II. His meek submission to it. 1. He saw the hand of God in this trial; 2. He looked to God to overrule it for his good. Learn—(1) What spirit you are to manifest under any injuries you sustain; (2) How you are to obtain it.[b]

A modern Shimei.—"We met a boy driving a couple of mules, which were instantly seized by one of the followers of the camp, without any pretext whatever, except the old border one of having the strongest hand. The boy struggled stoutly against the thief, and was not disposed to submit quietly to being spoiled. At last, when overcome, and his mules were driven away from him, he ran along the hillside above the path we were taking, and wept aloud, calling down the curses of Heaven upon the man who had robbed him. Like Shimei the poor lad 'went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.' The whole scene was Biblical, and but for the French uniforms ahead one could have fancied a vision to have risen up of 'the Benjamite of Bahurim.'"[c]

David's magnanimity

9—14. (9) **dead dog,**[a] ch. ix. 8. **go over,** the ravine. (10) Another indication of the submissive mood David was in. (11) **my son,** the heavier affliction took away the trouble of the lesser. (12) **affliction,** Heb. *eye.* marg. *tears.* (13) **went along,** the ridge above them. **cast dust,** scattering it over the royal party to annoy them. (14) **weary,** poss. this is the name of a place, *Ayephum.* **refreshed themselves,** with Ziba's present.

a 1 S. xxiv. 14

The absorbing influence of great troubles (*v.* 11).—I. This history reminds us that mean men, like Shimei, take a cowardly advantage of those they dislike. II. That great trials tend to make us insensible to lesser ones. What were the curses of this man now to David while his heart was wrung by the rebellion of Absalom and the revolt of his subjects? III. One great trouble which we may bravely meet may make us forget a multitude of petty cares.

v. 11. *Dr. J. Gardiner,* 361.

vv. 11—13. *C. Bradley,* ii. 25.

Cursing in the East (*v.* 13.)—Who, in the East, has not often witnessed a similar scene? Listen to the maledictions: they are of such a nature that evil spirits only could have suggested them. Look at the enraged miscreant: he dares not come near for fear of punishment, but he stands at a distance, vociferates his imprecations, violently throws about his hands; then stoops to the ground, and takes up handfuls of dust, throws it in the air, and exclaims, "Soon shalt thou be as that—thy mouth shall soon be full of it—look, look, thou cursed one, as this dust, so shalt thou be."[b]

"There are none more abusive to others than they that lie most open to themselves; but the humour goes round, and he that laughs at me to-day will have somebody to laugh at him to-morrow."—*Seneca.*

b Roberts.

Absalom with Ahithophel and Hushai

15—19. (15) **all,** who formed his company. (16) **Hushai,** ch. xv. 32. (17) **is this,** *etc.,* Ab. suspected him. (18) A very equivocal, though in Ab.'s conceited state an apparently *loyal,*

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v. 15. *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 242.

v. 17. *Dr. B. C. Butler*, 295.

Ahithophel's counsel

a *Jamie.on.*

b *Blunt* suggests the desire of Ahit. to make Dav. taste the bitterness of that cup which he had caused others (*i.e.* Uriah and all Bathsheba's family) to drink."

v. 20. *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

"The eagle of one house is the fool in another." —*Gresset.*

The wives of the conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and, in possessing these, he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom. Herodotus, b. iii. cap. 68 informs us, that Smerdis having seized on the Persian throne, after the death of Cambyses, espoused all the wives of his predecessor.

"Falser than malice in the mouth of envy." —*M. Fix.*

c *Burder.*

answer. (19) **again**, as a further reason. As if it was quite certain that the son would succeed.

Is this thy kindness to thy friend? (v. 17).—I. Review the mercies of our heavenly Friend. II. Consider how men, even professed friends, sometimes act towards Him. III. Apply the question.

20—23. (20) **give counsel**, "the first cabinet council on record."[a] (21) This advice supports the idea that Ahithophel was grieved bec. of Dav.'s conduct to Bathsheba.[b] What he advised would be a public declaration by Ab. that he claimed his father's throne. (22) **top**, *etc.*, ch. xi. 2. (23) **oracle**, word, response by Urim. Highest praise for Ahit.'s wisdom.

The counsel of Ahithophel.—I. The counsel of Ahithophel was designed to make the breach between the king and his son impassable. II. This advice is imitated by the wicked and followed by the foolish at this day. Men would have those who have gone astray go so far that they cannot return. III. But God can turn such counsel in foolishness (xv. 31), and take the wise in their own craftiness.

Wives of deceased or dethroned kings.—The choosing or confirming of a new king in Guinea seldom continues long in dispute; for the eldest son no sooner hears of the king's death, than he immediately makes his interest among his friends, to take possession of the late king's court and wives; and succeeding happily in these particulars, he need not doubt the remainder, for the commonalty will not easily consent that after that he shall be driven from the throne: this seems somewhat like Absalom's design on his father David. To accomplish this design, the younger brother's party are always careful enough that he is near at hand, in order to take possession of the court. (Bosman's *Guinea.*) The name of Quiteva is common to the sovereign lord of the country bordering on the river Sofala in Ethiopia. He maintains a number of wives, the chief of whom are his near relations, and are denominated his queens; the residue are regarded merely as concubines. As soon as the Quiteva ceases to live, a successor is chosen, capable of governing with wisdom and prudence; and, indeed, should he be deficient in this respect, it would be enough that a majority of the king's concubines should join in his favour, as on these the possession of the throne depends. He therefore repairs to the royal palace, where he meets with some of the concubines of the late king, and with their consent he seats himself on the throne prepared for him in the midst of a large hall; when seated here, a curtain is drawn before him and his wives: hence he issues orders for his proclamation through the streets; this is the signal for the people to flock to render him homage and swear obedience, a ceremony which is performed amid great rejoicings.[c]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

Ahithophel adds further advice

v. 1. *J. C. Dieterle, Antiq* 353.

1—4. (1) **this night**, prompt action alone could secure success. Delay was wholly to the advantage of David. A small body of men would suffice for Ahit.'s scheme. (2) **king only**, they felt no fear of uniting the people under Ab. if the king were gone. Ahit. carefully judged the effect of a sudden surprise.

[a] "We must dis-

(3) **in peace**, the revolution being managed without bloodshed. (4) **pleased**, seemed wise and efficient.

A parricide in purpose (*v.* 4).—I. Consider the foulness of a heart that could be pleased with such a suggestion. The sin all the greater for the past kindness of David to this Absalom. II. Reflect that what men abhor in another they are often guilty of themselves—(*a*) As when they wish there were no God, no heavenly Father; (*b*) As when they desire to be liberated, even by death, from parental control. III. Pray that the heart may be preserved from murderous desires and thoughts.

5—10. (5) **call**, *etc.*, this would grieve Ahithophel; but it indicates the self-willed character of Absalom. (6) **was come**, he does not appear to have been present at the council. (7) **at this time**, may be good in itself, but does not duly weigh the circumstances. (8) He urges that special care would be given to securing the person of the king. **mighty men**, well knowing stratagem of war. (9) **some of them**, of the attacking party.[a] (10) Even the valiant of Ab.'s army would be afraid.

A caution for the careless (*v.* 10).—I. Revolt against government may be plausible and seem to promise success, but consequences of possible failure have to be considered. II. The great King against whom men rebel is "a Man of war," and His followers are inspired with the courage of their leader. III. All Israel know this, and will calmly await the issue of the conflict.

A bear robbed of her whelps (*v.* 8).—The Hindoos are as much afraid of the bear as of any other animal of the forest. Therefore, when letter-carriers and others have to travel through districts infested by bears, they are always armed with a crooked knife, in the shape of a sickle; and when the bear is preparing to give them a hug, one cut from this instrument will send them scampering off. When the female is robbed of her whelps, she is said to be more fierce than any other animal: hence many sayings refer to her rage, and are applied to the fury of violent men. "I will tear thee to pieces as a bear which has cubbed." "Begone, or I will jump upon thee as a bear." When a termagant takes her children with her to scold, it is said, "There goes the she-bear with her whelps!"[b]

11—14. (11) **battle . . person**, Heb. *that thy face go to the battle*.[a] (12) **as the dew**, irresistibly.[b] (13) **ropes**, to which hooks were fixed, and these were thrown to catch the walls of besieged towns. Hushai evidently appeals to the self-conceit of Absalom, and pleases him by his boasting speech. (14) **better**, not wiser, but better suited to the mood they were in. **the Lord**, in O. T. style the overruling of God is recognised.

The counsel of Ahithophel defeated (*v.* 14).—I. In what respect was the counsel of Ahithophel "good?" (*a*) Not that it was virtuous and right, (*b*) but that it was adapted to the occasion, and most likely to succeed. II. How was it defeated? (*a*) By the overruling of Providence; (*b*) By the substituting of advice that seemed more plausible; (*c*) The mob is apt to choose not the best but what is liked the best. III. Practical lessons—(*a*) Men may, as they think, be following their own plans, and yet be working out Divine purposes; (*b*) The hearts of all are in God's hands. (*c*) Men's best measures—those of sound policy and prudence—may prove to be the worst "There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death."

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tinguish between felicity and prosperity; for prosperity leads often to ambition, and ambition to disappointment; the course is then over, the wheel turns round but once, while the practice of goodness and happiness is perpetual."—*Landor.*

Hushai counsels otherwise

a "If he were hidden in any defile, or other refuge, and at the first onset turned upon his pursuers with even but partial success, the report would spread of a great defeat of David's enemies, and terror would seize even the most lion-heartedwarrior."—*Ewald.*

b Roberts.

Hushai's advice approved

a "Hushai insinuates that Ahithophel, by his counsel, had been desirous of robbing Absalom of the glory of the victory over David, and of assuming it to himself. So he practises on Ab.'s vainglory and self-love, and excites him against Ahithophel."—*Wordsworth.*

b "No image could have sym-

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bolised the sudden onset of an enemy so graphically to an Oriental mind, as the silent, irresistible and rapid descent of this natural moisture on every field and blade of grass." — *Jamieson.*

c Burder.

"Gems which adorn the beauteous tresses of the weeping morn."—*Poole.*

d Forbes.

Hushai tells David

a "Knowing Ab,'s weak and fickle character, Hushai would not depend upon the resolution." —*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Ki. i. 9.

"But all was false and hollow; though his tongue dropped manna, and could make the worse appear the better reason, to perplex and dash maturest counsels."—*Milton.*

"Though fear see nothing but extremity, yet danger is no deep sea, but a ford, where they that yield can only be drowned be."—*Greville.*

David being warned crosses Jordan

a "A cloth with a heap of corn." —*Stanley.*

b Vulg. has *peeled barley.*

a "Schulz found

As the dew falleth (*v.* 12).—This is very beautiful and expressive. The dew in Palestine, as in several other climates, falls fast and sudden, and is therefore no unapt emblem of an active, expeditious soldiery. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the Romans called their light armed forces *Rorarii.* The dew falls upon every spot of the earth; not a blade of grass escapes it. A numerous army resembles it in this respect. It is able to search everywhere.[c]—*Oriental hyperbole* (*v.* 13).—On advancing, the chopdars or heralds proclaimed the titles of this princely cowkeeper, Futty Sihng, in the usual hyperbolical style. One of the most insignificant-looking men I ever saw then became the destroyer of nations, the leveller of mountains, the exhauster of the ocean. After commanding every inferior mortal to make way for this exalted prince, the heralds call aloud to the animal creation, "Retire, ye serpents; fly, ye locusts; approach not, guanas, lizards, and reptiles, while your lord and master condescends to set his foot on the earth!" Arrogant as this language may appear, it is less so than the Oriental pageantry in general. The sacred writings afford many instances of such hyperbole. None more so than Hushai's speech to Absalom.[d]

15—18. (15) Hushai did not feel sure that his counsel would be followed, but it had secured the necessary delay; and now it was necessary to put David on his guard.[a] (16) **plain,** *etc.*, ch. xv. 28. (17) **En-rogel,** Jos. xv. 7, xvii. 16.[b] **wench,** maid-servant, who went to the well as if for water. (18) **saw them,** the two young priests conversing with the maiden. **Bahurim,** ch. xvi. 5. **well,** prob. *cistern;* this might readily be covered over.

The small pivots of great events (*v.* 17, 18.).—I. We find this illustrated by the history before us. "A wench went and told." "A lad saw." How much depended on the girl's tongue, and the lad's eyes. II. It finds many illustrations in all history. III. Many examples may be found in human life and experience. Little things often turn the course, and decide the character of great events and lives.

Washing linen in the East (*v.* 17).—In the East, the washing of foul linen is performed by women by the sides of rivers and fountains. Dr. Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor*, p. 21, says, that "the women resort to the fountains by the houses, each with a two-handled earthen jar on her back, or thrown over her shoulder for water. They assemble at one without the village or town, if no river be near, to wash their linen, which is afterward spread on the ground or bushes to dry." May not this circumstance, says Mr. Harmer, serve to confirm the conjecture that the young woman that was sent to En-rogel, went out of the city with a bundle of linen, as if she were going to wash it? Nothing was more natural, or better calculated to elude jealousy.

19—22. (19) **covering,**[a] poss. "the hanging or awning of the door of the house." **ground corn,** meal, as if she desired to dry it in the sun.[b] (20) **gone over,** *etc.*, an equivocal reply, not denying they had been with her, because this may have led to a search. She indicates a wrong direction to put them off the scent.[c] (21) **water,** of Jordan, this movement secured Dav. against surprise. This must have occurred late at night, or very early in the morning.[d] (22) **morning light,** of day following the flight.

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The escape over Jordan (*v.* 22).—I. The true servant of God will find this life full of difficulty and danger. II. God is always on his side to warn him of danger and provide for his safety. III. The morning light of an eternal day will reveal the great king's host and show that there lacked not one of them that is is not gone over Jordan.

Hiding in the well (*v.* 19).—This was done to conceal Jonathan and Ahimaaz, who had gone down the well to escape from the servants of Absalom. Wells in the East have their mouths level with the ground, hence, nothing is more easy than to put a mat or covering over the opening to conceal them from the sight. Who has not seen corn or flour spread on mats in the sun to dry? The woman affected to have this object in view when she spread a covering over the well: her "ground corn" was spread thereon to dry in the sun. The men were in the well, and when Absalom's servants came, and inquired, "Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" she said, "They be gone over the brook of water." In the Kandian war great numbers were required to follow the army as bearers, cooks, and messengers, and such was the aversion of the people to the duty, that government was obliged to use force to compel them to go. And it was no uncommon thing, when the officers were seen to approach a cottage, for the husband or sons to be concealed as were Ahimaaz and Jonathan.[e]

23–26. (23) **his city,** Giloh, ch. xv. 12. **hanged himself,**[a] in excessive mortification at the rejection of his counsel. (24) **Mahanaim,**[b] Ge. xxxii. 2, a fortified city, in a well-provisioned country, a good rallying point. (25) **Amasa,**[c] nephew to David. **Ithra,** or *Jether*. **Nahash,** either Jesse's wife, or the name of first husband of Zeruiah and Abigail's mother. (26) **pitched,** to decide the kingdom by a battle.

The godless man's refuge from disappointed pride (*v.* 23).—I. In Ahithophel we have a proud man writhing with mortification. In his overweening estimate of his own intellectual superiority he deems it impossible that another can be counted wiser than himself. II. We have further a man so proud that he cannot endure the slights of his fellow-men, and yet so blind that he will hurry to the sentence of a higher tribunal. III. He who is wrong with man cannot, by self-destruction, put himself right with God. IV. Let any who may be tempted to put an end to their life consider Matt. x. 28.

Highway to suicide (*v.* 23).—The Rev. John Owen, the eloquent advocate of the Bible Society, after adverting, in a sermon to the young, to the peaceful death of a little girl, mentions the awful end of a youth who had been seduced from the paths of virtue by wicked associates. "Scarcely," says he, "had the turf been spread over the mortal remains of this young disciple, when the ground was opened to receive another of our youth, who, awful to relate, had raised his arm, and that with too fatal success, against the precious, the invaluable deposit of his own life. This deluded youth had received the benefit of a Christian education in one of our schools of gratuitous instruction; and, like the happy subject who preceded him into eternity, had been carefully lectured in the house of God on matters which concerned his salvation. But a removal from school to employment was to him, as it unhappily is to too many of our youth, the signal for renouncing his attendance upon the ordinances of

a small brook in this very district, still called *Michal.*" — *Spk. Com.*

d See Ps. iii., iv.

v. 22. *H. Lindsay, Lec.* ii. 199.

"In morals, what begins in fear usually ends in wickedness; in religion, what begins in fear usually ends in fanaticism. Fear, either as a principle or a motive, is the beginning of all evil."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

e Roberts.

the suicide of Ahithophel

a "Bp. Hall quaintly remarks of him, that though mad enough to hang himself, he was wise enough to set his house in order before he did it."—*Kitto.*

b 2 Sa. ii. 8, 12, 29.

c 1 Chr. ii. 16, 17.

v. 23. *Bp. Fleetwood,* 337; *W. Jones.* vii. 102; *Dr. W. Paley,* i. 218.

"O that this too, too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew; or that the everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God! O God! how weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world."—*Shakespeare.*

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religion. The consequence was such as might naturally be apprehended. He fell into the snare of evil company, and became licentious, profligate, and abandoned. Diseased, disgraced, despondent, without any cordial from religious hope, any support in Christian resignation, he yielded to the temptation of the destroyer, and completed the measure of his sin, his misery, and his dishonour, by an act of deliberate suicide."

provisions sent to David

27—29. (27) Shobi, poss. appointed governor of Ammon after the taking of Rabbah. **Machir,** ch. ix. 4. **Barzillai,**[a] ch. xix. 31—40. **Rogelim,** *the fullers*, situated in the highlands of Gilead. (28) **basons,** cups; or cauldrons, kettles.[b] (29) **cheese of kine,** from buttermilk.[c]

In the wilderness (*v.* 29).—I. Morally regarded, the world is a wilderness to the people of God. II. God's people are often hungry, weary, and thirsty therein. III. But the wilderness belongs to God, and he can "furnish a table" there and give streams in the desert.

Parched corn (*v.* 28)—Parched corn is a kind of food still retained in the East, as Hasselquist informs us: "On the road from Acre to Seide, we saw a herdsman eating his dinner, consisting of half ripe ears of wheat, which he roasted and ate with as good an appetite as a Turk does his pillau. In Egypt such food is much eaten by the poor, being the ears of maize or Turkish wheat, and of their durra, which is a kind of millet. When this food was first invented, art was in a simple state; yet the custom is still continued in some nations, where the inhabitants have not even at this time learned to pamper nature." The flour of parched barley is the chief provision which the Moors of West Barbary make for travelling. It is indeed much used as a part of their diet at home. "What is most used by travellers is zumeet, tumeet, or flour of parched barley for limerecee. They are all three made of parched barley-flour, which they carry in a leathern satchel. Zumeet is the flour mixed with honey, butter, and spice; tumeet is the same flour done up with origan oil; and limerecee is only mixed with water, and so drank. This quenches thirst much better than water alone, satiates a hungry appetite, cools and refreshes tired and weary spirits, overcoming those ill effects which a hot sun and fatiguing journey might occasion." (Jones.) Mr. Harmer proposes this extract as an illustration of the passage now cited.[d]

a Ezr. ii. 61—63.

b *Wordsworth.*

c "As coupled with sheep, perh. suckling calves, or milch cows are meant." — *Spk. Com.*—Some suggest potted meat, as now prepared in E., as food for journeys. Thus *Busbequius*, speaking of the Turkish soldiers going on an expedition into Persia, says, "Some of them filled a leathern bag with beef dried, and reduced to a kind of meal, which they use with great advantage, as affording a strong nourishment." And *Dr. Shaw* mentions potted flesh as part of the provisions carried with him in his journey through the Arabian deserts.

d *Burder.*

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David's charge concerning Absalom

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1—5. (1) numbered, Heb. *pakad*, with further idea a *review*, inspect. **the people,** many Gileadites having joined Dav. he had now quite an army. **captains,** *etc.*, 1 Sa. viii. 12.[a] (2) **Ittai,** a recognition of his devotion.[b] (3) **thou . . us,** as a revolution intended to *change the king*, everything depended on Dav.'s life.[c] **succour . . city,** wh. would be done by covering their retreat, if necessary. (4) **gate side,** to give his charge about Ab., and his blessing on the enterprise. (5) **gently,** they might take prisoner but not kill.

Deal gently with Absalom (*v.* 5).—Absalom the arch-conspirator was in imminent peril from the zealand love of David's adherents. Our love for our King may lead us to deal harshly with His foes,

a *Ewald* thinks Mahanaim had been besieged, but from some unknown cause Ab. had been compelled to raise the siege.

b 2 Sa. xv. 19—21.

c Comp. 1 Ki. xii. 31.

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II. Amid the multifarious concerns of the situation David cares for his prodigal son. God's tenderness and clemency are still greater. III. David urges the strongest plea in his son's behalf "For my sake." This is Christ's plea—for My sake—be kind to the sinner, I died for him. It shows a truer appreciation of the work and mind of Jesus to be kind, than treat with the severity of godly zeal, those who are rebels against the great King.

Value depends on place (*v.* 3).—King James IV. commanded in person at the battle of Flodden Field. Both parties did wonders, but none on either side did more than the king himself. He was told that by coming to handy blows he could do no more than another man, whereas by keeping the post due to his station, he might be worth many thousands. Yet he could not only fight in person, but also on foot. It was said by one of the generals who fought with Wellington that the presence of the Iron Duke in any part of the field was equal to a reinforcement by a division of three or four thousand men.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*; *Dr. T. Laurie, Lect.* 68.

"'Y'had best, quoth Ralpho, as the ancients say wisely,—Have a care o' the main chance, and look before you ere you leap; for as you sow you are like to reap."—*Butler.*

6–8. (6) **wood**[1] **of Ephraim,** certainly somewhere E. of Jordan.[b] (7) **slaughter,** in mod. language, so many were put *hors de combat*, not actually killed. (8) **scattered,** through skilful generalship of Joab, acting in three divisions. **wood devoured,** "thick oaks, tangled bushes, and thorny creepers growing over rugged rocks and ruinous precipices, down which the rebel army plunged in wild dismay."[c]

battle in the wood of Ephraim

a "Heb. *yaar*; Arab *wa'ar*, a wild, rocky region, overgrown with trees."—*Thomson.*

b "The name may be explained fr. the connection of blood with the Trans-Jordanic Manasseh, or from the massacre of the Ephraimites in that neighbourhood by Jephthah. (Ju. xii. 6)."—*Stanley.*

"Another sug. is that the name was fixed fr. this battle, in wh. Ephraim took the lead."—*Wordsworth.*

c Thomson.

The wood and the sword (*v.* 8).—I. Man's chief reliance in war is upon the weapon he has made—(*a*) applies to armaments, armies, defences; (*b*) applies to treaties and diplomacy; (*c*) topolemics; men depend on the syllogism, learning, etc. II. In all war there are other sources of defeat and disaster than those of human invention. "The Word," which is God's, devours "more than the sword," which is man's. Natural forces, the stars in their courses, etc. III. Do not rely too much on perfect armaments; neither be disheartened by their incompleteness. If God be with us a storm from him will be mightier than the Armadas of our foes.

Advance to the battle (*vv.* 2, 3).—It is said when the footsore and wearied regiments of the Union Army neared Gettysburg, and the sounds of the battle reached their ears, worn-out and sick officers and men, inspired with a new strength, grasped their arms, moved forward to the scene of strife. A poor fellow, who looked the image of death, hobbled out of an ambulance, and, shouldering his musket, was just starting forward, when the surgeon stopped him with, "Where are you going, sir?" The brave fellow tried hard to stand firm, and speak boldly, "To the front, doctor." "What! a man in your condition! You can't march half a mile. You haven't strength to carry yourself, let alone your musket and equipments. You have every symptom of the typhoid fever: a little over exertion will certainly kill you?" "Well, doctor," said he, "if I must die, I would rather die in the field than in an ambulance."[d]

d Rev. E. B. Tuthill.

9–13. (9) **met,** in his flight. Intimating that they let him escape. **mule,** lit. *the* mule, *i.e.* the king's own.[a] **great oak,** *terebinth.* **head caught,** by the long hair,[b] and then wedged into a fork of the branches.[c] (10) **hanged,** not in sense of dead. (11) **a girdle,** poss. a captain's commission was signified

Absalom caught in the oak

a Josephus. See 1 Ki. i. 33, 38, 44.

b "It is neces. to

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be continually on one's guard against the branches of the trees, and when the hair is worn in large locks floating down the back, any thick bough interposing in the path might easily dislodge a rider from his seat."—*Hartley.*

c Josephus. "The two things of his pride, his mule and his hair, contributed to his untimely death." — *Spk. Com.*

d M. Henry.

e "A girdle curiously and richly wrought, was among the ancient Heb. a mark of honour, and sometimes bestowed as a reward of military merit." — *Jamieson.*

f Paxton.

Joab slays Absalom

a Bp. Patrick.

b Keil.

c Sept., Vulg., Syr., Targ., Ewald, etc.

d "Though an act of disobedience, from the statesman's point of view Joab's act was one of good policy."—*Kitto.*

e "Mod. Jews, as they pass the monument in the valley of the Kidron, to wh. they have given his name, have buried its sides deep in the stones wh. they throw against it in execration." — *Stanley.*

vv. 14, 15. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 213.

by the delivery of a girdle.[d] Certainly girdles were costly things, often given as presents.[e] (12) **charged,** *v.* 5. (13) **falsehood,** idea of untrue, unfaithful.

The snarer ensnared (*v.* 9).—I. The sword had so far spared Absalom, now the wood devoured him. II. He who would not have spared his father is now unspared by God. III. Those captivating tresses by which—as an element of his personal beauty—the people were fascinated prove his ruin. IV. Lifted up between earth and heaven, of which place was he worthy?

The girdle (*v.* 11).—To loose the girdle and give it to another was, among the Orientals, a token of great confidence and affection. Thus to ratify the covenant which Jonathan made with David, and to express his cordial regard for his friend among other things he gave him his girdle. A girdle curiously and richly-wrought was, among the ancient Hebrews, a mark of honour, and sometimes bestowed as a reward of merit; for this was the recompense which Joab declared he meant to bestow on the man who put Absalom to death: "Why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle." The reward was certainly meant to correspond with the importance of the service which he expected him to perform, and the dignity of his own station as commander-in-chief: we may therefore suppose it was not a common one of leather, or plain worsted, but of costly materials, and richly adorned; for people of rank and fashion in the East wear very broad girdles, all of silk, and superbly ornamented with gold and silver, and precious stones, of which they are extremely proud, regarding them as the tokens of their superior station, and the proof of their riches.[f]

14—17. (14) **tarry,** "Lose time in such discourse."[a] **three darts,** "pointed wooden staves:"[b] the word is not elsewhere used for the lance or javelin; but trans. *spear* is well supported.[c] **midst,** Heb. *heart.* (15) **slew him,** finishing the work.[d] (16) **blew,** *etc.*, ch. ii. 28. **held back,** bec. Ab.'s death ended the battle. (17) **heap of stones,** not as monument, but in execration of his crime.[e]

Memorial stone (*v.* 17).—To mark the spot where the chiefs were buried, and to remain at the same time as a memorial of the battle in which they fell, their surviving friends raised over them a heap of stones. This practice may be traced to the primitive ages of the world; for when Absalom was defeated and slain, "they cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him." This monumental heap was not intended to indicate that Absalom deserved to be stoned as a rebellious son, but merely to mark, according to a very common and a very ancient custom, the grave of that ambitious and unnatural prince. It was usual in the East, indeed, to distinguish any remarkable place or event by a heap of stones. All the Mohammedans that go in pilgrimage to Mount Sinai visit a rock, on which the form of a camel's foot is imprinted, which they foolishly suppose to be the animal that Mohammed rode; and, therefore, in honour of their prophet, they bring every one a stone, till, by continual accumulation, a large heap has risen near the place. Jacob, and his family too, raised a heap of stones in commemoration of the covenant so happily concluded between him and Laban on Mount Gilead. That "heap of witness"

informed every passenger that it was raised in memory of some interesting event; and every relation that brought a stone to the heap made himself a witness to the agreement, as well as recommended it to the attention of others. The surviving warriors, too, might bring every man his stone, in token of their respect for the deceased, to raise a monumental heap over the body of the hero who had led them to battle and to victory, which should arrest the notice of the passing traveller, and bear witness to future times of their attachment and regret.*f*

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"Sometimes let gorgeous tragedy in sceptred pall come sweeping by."—*Milton.*

f *Paxton.*

18–23. (18) Contrasting the monument of shame he had, with the monument of pride which he planned for himself.*a* **king's date,** valley of Jehoshaphat; or poss. in the south, near Hebron: the vale of Shaveh,*b* **no son,** ch. xiv. 27; these must have died. **Ab.'s place,***c* lit. *hand.* (19) **run,** this was his peculiar and well-known power (*v.* 27). (20) **shalt not,** bec. Joab feared the instant passionate anger of the king. (21) **Cushi,** an Ethiopian, the Cushite.*d* (22) **ready,** convenient; idea likely to be acceptable. (23) **plain,***e* though farther round, the road may have been easier.

Absalom's pillar

Ahimaaz, Cushi

a "His real monument was a solitary cairn in the wild forest, instead of a lordly pillar in the 'King's dale,' near the capital city." — *Wordsworth.*

b Ge xiv. 17.

c "The tomb said to be Ab.'s is 24 ft. sq., dome-topped, and reaches 40 ft. in height, but the architecture is not of the period."—*Jamieson.*

d Not *Cush*, the Benjamite.

e "Poss. word means a peculiar kind of running."—*Ewald.*

v. 18. *Crit. Sac. Thes. Nov.* i. 685.

f *W. Tringham, M.A.*

"How many are so entombed by the riches, the honours, the pleasures, and the sins of the world, as only to be taken out of them to be buried in the earth."—*Marsh.*

Absalom's pillar (*v.* 18).—Learn—I. That nothing can prosper without the blessing of God, and that this can never rest on the head of one who is wanting in filial duty. II. That it is a sorrowful thing when the great love of Christ is cast away; for it is stronger than the love of parents. III. That any who wish to be remembered after death should seek to establish some worthier memorial than Absalom did.*f*

Another outline on same verse.—I. The monument desired; (1) It is the fate of man to die and be soon forgotten; (2) It is the wish of man to be remembered; (3) Absalom took steps to preserve the memory of his name. Hence the pillar he reared. What was the epitaph? It could not be "To the memory of a faithful friend, an affectionate brother, a loyal subject, and a dutiful son." II. The monument realised; (1) Who raised it? Those who execrated his memory; (2) What was it? A heap or cairn of stones without an inscription, just to mark the spot where he lay; (3) Where was it? In a dark wood, not among the tombs of the great and good. III. Account for the difference; (1) Absalom seemed to think that his being of royal birth was sufficient to secure a royal tomb, with a high-sounding inscription on it; (2) He forgot that a true epitaph is a summing up of the chief exploits of the life, and the leading features of the character. Learn: (1) Your epitaph will presently have to be written. What would you like it to be? (2) Are you striving to deserve the epitaph that you desire? (3) The grace of God can make you all that you wish to be, and more; (4) However lowly your monument on earth, seek to have your name written in heaven.

The tomb of Absalom (*v.* 18).—On the east, we came to the reputed tomb of Absalom, resembling nearly, in the size, form, and decoration of its square base, that of Zacharias, before described: except that it is sculptured with the metopes and triglyphs of the Doric order. This is surmounted by a sharp conical dome, of the form used in our modern parasols, having large mouldings, resembling ropes running round its base, and on the summit something like an imitation of flame. The dome is of masonry, and on the eastern side there is a square aperture in it.

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g Buckingham.

It is probable that this monument really occupies the place of that mentioned to have been set up by him whose name it bears. Josephus, in relating the same circumstance, calls the pillar a marble one; he fixes its distance at two furlongs from Jerusalem, and says it was named Absalom's Hand.*g*

David waiting for news

c. 28. *Dr. J. Scott*, iii. 185.

"Is a man seen to run fast, it is said. 'Ah! there is news in his mouth.' 'Why have you come so fast?' 'In my mouth there is news.' To a man in trouble it is often said, 'Fear not, a man will soon come with tidings in his mouth.'"—*Roberts.*

a Percy Anec.

"Newspapers were first invented by a French physician, who, finding his visits welcome whenever he brought any news or gossip, applied to Cardinal Richelieu for a patent to publish the *Paris Gazette*, in 1622."—*Chambers.*

"Sorrow turns the stars into mourners, and every wind of heaven into a dirge."—*Hannay.*

b Shakespeare.

David mourns for Absalom

a "He rushed into the watchman's chamber over the gateway, and eight times over repeated the wail of grief for Ab.,

24—28. (24) **two gates,** inner and outer. **roof,** or tower above the gates. (25) **apace,** swiftly. (26) coming thus singly showed the army was not defeated. (27) **running,** so peculiar as to be noticed at a distance. (28) **called,** shouting out before actual arrival. His message equivocal.

Ahimaaz and Cushi.—I. Running is not everything; there is much in the way which we select. II. Two ways before men. (*a*) Self, up the hill of works; down the ravines of resolutions and humiliations; (*b*) Christ, the way of life, plain, pleasant, suitable. III. He who runs by this way will outrun all others. IV. If men thus vie with each other in common matters, should we not be in earnest about eternal things. V. The king beholds the runners, and knows them by the running.

Running footmen.—At the present day, the general goodness of the roads throughout Europe, the opportunities of changing horses, and the vast speed of these animals for a short time, renders swiftness in man of less consequence than it was in the days of our fathers, who kept in their service men of great ability, who were denominated running footmen, and employed upon all messages requiring despatch. The following facts evince that it is possible for men to perform journeys upon foot, with greater expedition than even by the modern and improved methods of travelling by post. Philippides, being sent by the Athenians to Sparta, to implore their aid in the Persian war, in the space of two days, ran one thousand two hundred and sixty furlongs—that is, one hundred and seventy Roman miles and a half. Fuchidas was sent by the same Athenians to Delphos, to desire some of the holy fire from thence. He went and returned in the same day, having walked a thousand furlongs, or one hundred and twenty-five Roman miles. When Fonteius and Vipsanus were consuls, there was a boy called Addas, who, in one day, ran seventy-five miles.*a*

Sensations caused by news.—

> Old men, and beldams, in the streets,
> Do prophesy upon it dangerously:
> Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths;
> And when they talk of him they shake their heads,
> And whisper one another in the ear;
> And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist;
> Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
> With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.*b*

29—33. (29) He had not courage enough to tell all he **knew.** (30) **turn aside,** Dav. wanted news from the second runner. (31) **tidings,** as a foreigner, and a servant only, Cushi would not feel the hesitation of Ahimaaz. (32) **enemies,** *etc.*, even he seems to have been afraid to tell the truth plainly. (33) **chamber,**[a] seeking privacy, but his cry of grief was heard. **would...thee,** lit. "*Who will grant me to die for thee.*"

Is the young man Absalom safe? (*v.* 32).—I. The perils to which youth, and esp. young men, are exposed, which occasion this in-

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quiry. There are four evils in wh. Absalom indulged, and wh. eventually led to his ruin—1. Expensive habits; 2. Hypocritical pretensions; 3. Evil associates; 4. Indulgence in unlawful pursuits. II. The object to which the inquiry of the text is directed; your safety. In order to secure your safety, young man, there must be—1. Faith in Christ; 2. Obedience to His Gospel. III. The spirit in which this inquiry is made. A spirit of—1. Tender anxiety; 2. Ardent love; 3. Fervent prayer. Conclusion. (1) If you are not safe, what effect would a faithful reply to this inquiry produce on the minds of all who are interested in you? (2) See the necessity of immediate and entire submission to Christ; (3) Remember what joy your safety would diffuse throughout the whole Church.[b]

A father's question.—I. This was an affectionate father's inquiry concerning a very dear son of his who was away from home. II. It was his inquiry concerning a son whom he knew to be surrounded by wicked advisers. III. It was his inquiry concerning a son whom he knew to be engaged in a wicked and dangerous enterprise. IV. It was his inquiry, although he knew that if his son were safe he himself would be in peril. V. It was an inquiry that was doomed to meet with a very sad reply. Learn:—(1) The young man away from home is not forgotten; (2) The hearts at home are much affected by knowledge of previous history and character; (3) There is no real safety for the young till they are "safe in the arms of Jesus," and are "kept by the power of God unto salvation;" (4) So decide, pray, and live, that, in reply to the question, "Is the young man safe?" it may be said—to the great joy of those who hear the news—"Yes, he is safe in the society of the good, and in the service of Christ."[c]

Telling bad news (*v.* 32).—This was a delicate way of telling David that the rebel Absalom was dead. A person in communicating by letter intelligence of the death of a friend, does not always say, in so many plain terms, "He is dead;" but, "Would that all our enemies were now as our friend Muttoo!" "Ah! were they all as he, we should have peace in our village." A son, in writing to an uncle concerning the death of his father, says, "Ah! the children of your brother are now given unto the Lord." "Would that our enemies were now as our father! They will now rejoice over us."[d]

Desiring news.—

The news! our morning, noon, and evening cry,
Day after day repeats it till we die.
For this the cit, the critic, and the fop,
Dally the hour away in Tonsor's shop;
For this the gossip takes her daily route,
And wears your threshold and your patience out;
For this we leave the parson in the lurch.
And pause to prattle on the way to church;
Even when some coffin'd friend we gather round,
We ask, "What news?"—then lay him in the ground.[f]

his son."—*Stanley.*

v. 32. *Bp. Andrewes*, ii. 3.

v. 33. *Dr. R. Harris*, 209; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, ii. 173; *A. G. Spencer*, 273; *C. Simeon*, iii. 284; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 352; *Dr. T. F. Dibden*, 242.

b J. Sherman.

"A master passion is the love of news; not music so commands, nor so the Muse: give poets claret, they grow idle soon; feed the musician, and he's out of tune."—*G. Crabbe.*

c Hive.

In the depths of the sea the waters are still; the heaviest sorrow is that borne in silence; the deepest love flows through the eye and touch; the purest joy is unspeakable; the most impressive prayer is silent; and the most solemn preacher at a funeral is the silent one whose lips are cold.

d Roberts.

"Tears are the safety-valves of the heart, when too much pressure is laid on."—*Albert Smith*

f Sprague.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

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Joab hears of David's grief

a "Not through the gate where David was." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 1. *W. Reading*, iii. 410; *A. Williams*, ii. 190.

v. 2. *W. Jay*, viii. 1.

v. 4. *Bp. Wordsworth, Chris. Boyhood*, ii. 114; *C. O. Pratt*, 156.

"God made both tears and laughter, and both for kind purposes; for as laughter enables nirth and surprise to breathe freely, so tears enable sorrow to vent itself patiently. Tears hinder sorrow from becoming despair and madness; and laughter is one of the very privileges of reason, being confined to the human species."— *Leigh Hunt.*

a Constable's Miscellany

Joab reproves David

a 1 Ki. xv. 29, xvi. 11; 2 Ki. x. 7, 11, 17.

b "This threat, grounded on the general's unbounded popularity with the army, showed him to be a dangerous person."—*Jamieson.*

c 2 Sa. xv. 2; Je.

1—4. (1) **king weepeth,** in a way to depress the people. Joab knew it was time for action, not for mourning, if the king was to be restored. (2) **victory,** Heb. *deliverance or salvation.* (3) **by stealth,**[a] not entering as a triumphant army should with flags and songs. (4) **covered his face,** one of the attitudes of grief, ch. xv. 30.

A disastrous victory (*v.* 2).—Wellington said that the next worst thing to a terrible defeat was a glorious victory. I. Here a victory won, but a noble lost. A prince slain. How many of the great have fallen in victory—Nelson, Woolf, Abercrombie. II. Here a victory won, but a father bereft of his child. Many a father must lose his son to secure a victory. III. Other victories than those won on the tented field are similarly expensive.

Between the gates (see xviii. 24).—Now, in looking at the account given us in 2 Sa. xviii. and xix. we see the tower of entrance into Mahanaim furnished, like the castle at Tunbridge, with two pairs of gates, the one at a distance from the other, the king sitting between them, not, we may justly believe, in the passage itself, so as to block up the way, or at all incommode those who might be passing, but in a room by the side of the way. We find a watchman on the top of the tower, made, without doubt, commodious for that purpose by the staircases communicating with each other from the bottom to the top, as the English castle was flat, and covered with lead, for the purpose of descrying at a distance those who were coming, as well as wounding assailants. We find the observations made by the watchman were not communicated by him immediately to the king, but by the warder at the outer gate: and that there was communication between this lower room in which David first sat, and the upper room over the gateway, for by that means he retired to give vent to his sorrow.—*Jewish mourning.*—The Jews mingled a great deal of ceremony, with the tearing of garments, when any misfortune befell them. Sometimes they made the rent from the top downwards; sometimes from the skirt upwards. The requisite length was a hand's breadth. When made on the occasion of the death of parents, it was not sewed up again; when for the loss of other persons, it was sewed up at the end of thirty days. It is in reference to this practice that Solomon has said, there is "a time to rend and a time to sew;" that is to say, a time to be afflicted and a time to admit of consolation."[a]

5—8. (5) **Joab . . said,** assuming a haughty tone, as if he were the offended party. **shamed . . faces,** Ps. lxix. 7. **sons,** *etc.*, Ju. ix. 5.[a] (6) **regardest,** with pleasure, none of those who have imperilled their lives for you. Dav. needed such an arousing. (7) **go forth,** fr. the chamber to meet the returning soldiers. **comfortably,** encouragingly, thankfully. **I swear,** *etc.*, a threat. (8) **sat in the gate,**[c] cheered the people with his presence. **Israel,** Ab.'s followers.

Open to correction (*v.* 8).—I. David had this mark of true greatness in that he did not resent faithful rebukes. Once from Nathan, now from Joab. II. Those who profess themselves ready to receive reproof are often too much like one who said so,

and then added "But I would like to see the man who can convince me."

9—15. (9) **at strife,** uncertain and divided as to the course to adopt.[a] (10) **speak ye not,** prob. addressed to the tribe of Judah, wh. had not joined in the invitation. (11) **ye the last,** Jud. being Dav.'s own tribe; but there are many traces of its jealous feeling. (12) **bones,** *etc.*, ch. v. 1. (13) **Amasa,** now leader of the tribe. **of my bone,** here actual relationship. **room of Joab,** a dangerous promise, ch. iii. 39; xvi. 10; xix. 22. (14) **bowed,** with this appeal and persuasion. (15) **Gilgal,** Jos. v. 9, convenient, as being near the fords.

A leader of men (*v.* 14).—I. There must have been something very wonderful about this David that he had such power to sway the minds of others. II. Besides his great natural ability, his courage, his broad sympathetic soul, God was with him.

Amasa (*v.* 13).—As to the promise to Amasa, of constituting him general in Joab's room, the prudence of this may be also easily vindicated. For Amasa stood in the same degree of consanguinity to David as Joab did, and the offer to him of making him captain-general must, as it has been well observed, have been influenced by the personal qualities of the man—the importance of gaining him over—he being a person of great power and authority, and having a resentment against Joab for the murder of Abner and Absalom. Besides, I doubt not but that David thought he should now be able to break Joab's power, and bring him to an account for his repeated assassinations and treasons, as well as fix Amasa for ever in his interest, by placing so high a degree of confidence in him, as to give him the command of all the forces in his kingdom. This hath been frequently the method by which great men have endeavoured to gain over their enemies, and it argues a real generosity of soul, of which little minds are utterly incapable, to win an adversary to his duty by such unexpected instances of confidence and friendship. When Cinna, the grandson of Pompey, and other great men, conspired against Augustus, he not only pardoned them, but nominated Cinna consul for the ensuing year; and Cæsar not only spared Brutus, after he had appeared in arms against him, but took him into favour as his intimate friend, and intrusted him with the government of Gaul.[b]

16—20. (16) **Shimei,**[a] ch. xvi. 5—13. (17) **thousand men,** to show how valuable his help might be. **Ziba,** ch. xvi. 1—4. (18) **ferry boat,** or bridge of boats.[b] (19) **perversely,** indic. his penitence. (20) **house of Joseph,**[c] expression for all the 10 tribes, bec. they were led by Ephraim. Shimei avoids annoying Dav. by mention of Benj., Saul's tribe.[d]

The worshipper of success.—I. Such craven souls always look less at the man than his circumstances. Shimei will do homage to success, not to the right. He will bow down as willingly to Absalom as to David. II. Such men are perfectly unreliable. If we succeed we may be sure of Shimei's help. Is it worth much? If we fail and need help we must not look to Shimei. III. The enemies of Jesus also will one day applaud him conqueror.

David's magnanimity (*v.* 19).—

The fine and noble way to kill a foe
Is not to kill him: you with kindness may

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xxxviii. 7, xxxix. 3.

Judah goes to welcome David

a "The sentiments of 2 different parties are represented in vv. 9. 10. The royalists, the adherents of Ab., and those indifferent to the Davidic dynasty."—*Jamieson.*

v. 10. *T. Morer,* 120; *T. Balguy,* i. 47.

v. 14. *T. Goddard,* 16.

v. 15. *H. Lindsay, Lect.* ii. 226.

"Memory is Adam sitting outside the gates of Paradise, weeping over pleasures gone for ever. Hope is Adam, in the strength of God's promises, going about to engage in the activities of a holy life, looking for the everlasting joys of the world to come."—*Dr. Deems.*

b Chandler.

Shimei joins in the welcome

a 1 Ki. ii. 8, 9.

b Stanley. "Prob. a raft, such as have been used from time immemorial on the Euphrates and Tigris; and the word rendered 'household' may mean merely goods."

c "Joseph comprehends all Israel (Jos. xvi. 1)."—*Keil*

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So change him, that he shall cease to be so;
And then he's slain. Sigismund used to say
His pardons put his foes to death; for when
He mortify'd their hate, he kill'd them then.[c]

Prosecution in the East.—In the East, the right of calling an offender to account is claimed either by the person who receives the injury or his nearest relation; and the same person, with the permission or connivance of his people, sustains at once the character of party, judge, and executioner. In such a state of things, we are not to be surprised if the exercise of justice be often precipitate and tumultuary. The act of the Philistines, in burning the spouse of Samson and her father with fire, was entirely of this character; not the result of a regular sentence, but the summary vengeance of an incensed multitude. In the law of Moses, the right of the private avenger was distinctly recognised; but to prevent the dreadful effects of sudden and personal vengeance, cities of refuge were appointed at convenient distances through the land of promise, to which the manslayer might flee for safety, till he could be brought to a regular trial, before a court of justice. In almost every part of Asia, those who demand justice against a criminal throw dust upon him, signifying that he deserves to lose his life, and be cast into the grave; and that this is the true interpretation of the action is evident from an imprecation in common use among the Turks and Persians, Be covered with earth; Earth be upon thy head. We have two remarkable instances of casting dust recorded in Scripture; the first is that of Shimei, who gave vent to his secret hostility to David, when he fled before his rebellious son, by throwing stones at him and casting dust. It was an ancient custom, in those warm and arid countries, to lay the dust before a person of distinction, and particularly before kings and princes, by sprinkling the ground with water. To throw dust into the air while a person was passing, was therefore an act of great disrespect; to do so before a sovereign prince, an indecent outrage. But it is clear from the explanation of the custom, that Shimei meant more than disrespect and outrage to an afflicted king, whose subject he was; he intended to signify by that action that David was unfit to live, and that the time was at last arrived to offer him a sacrifice to the ambition and vengeance of the house of Saul.*f*

21—23. (21) **Abishai,** comp. 1 Sa. xxvi. 8; 2 Sa. xvi. 9. (22) **any man,** *etc.*, mercy and forgiveness were becoming to such a day of joy. (23) **not die,** a very limited release: really no more than *not die just now.*

Royal magnanimity (*v.* 23).—I. The kingly scorn with which David forgave the poor abject wretch. It must have stung him to the quick to find that David thought him and his past rebelliousness unworthy of notice. II. If you succeed, think of David, and be merciful to poor wretched Shimei. III. How many are there now in the ranks of Christ's friends who once reviled him.

Trimming the beard (*v.* 24).—They almost universally dye them black, by an operation not very pleasant, and necessary to be repeated generally once a fortnight. It is always performed in the hot bath, where the hair being well saturated takes the colour better. A thick paste of khenna is first made, which is largely

d Wordsworth.

e Aleyn.

"The great chain of causes which link one to another, to the throne of God Himself, can never be unrolled by any industry of ours. When we go but one step beyond the immediate sensible qualities of things, we go out of our depth; all we do after is but a faint struggle, that shows us we are in an element which does not belong to us." —*Burke.*

"Alas! how many causes that can plead well for themselves in the courts of Westminster, and yet in the general court of the universe, and free soul of man, have no word to utter!"—*Carlyle.*

"A curse is like a cloud, it passes."—*Byron.*

f Paxton.

David spares Shimei

v. 21. *L. Sterne,* iii. 1.

"This nor hurts him, nor profits you a jot; forbear it, therefore; give your cause to heaven." —*Shakespeare.*

plastered over the beard, and which, after remaining an hour, is all completely washed off, and leaves the hair of a very strong orange colour, bordering upon that of brickdust. After this, as thick a paste is made of the leaf of the indigo, which previously has been pounded to a fine powder, and of this also a deep layer is put upon the beard; but this second process, to be taken well, requires full two hours. During all this operation the patient lies quietly flat upon his back; while the dye (more particularly the indigo, which is a great astringent) contracts the features of his face in a very mournful manner, and causes all the lower parts of the visage to smart and burn. When the indigo is at last washed off, the beard is of a very dark bottle-green, and becomes a jet black only when it has met the air for twenty-four hours. Some, indeed, are content with the khenna or orange colour; others, more fastidious, prefer a beard quite blue. The people of Bokhara are famous for their blue beards.[a]

24—30. (24) **came down,**[a] it does not certainly appear whether he was wholly faithful: this is the favourable construction to put on his conduct. These are the actions, or neglectings, usual in time of grief. **beard,** the moustache. beard of upper lip. (25) **to Jerusalem,** fr. his estate in the highlands of Benj. (26) **deceived me,**[b] evidently scheming to secure favour for himself. Being lame, Mephib. was very dependent on others. (27) **good,** right in thy kingly judgment. (28) Language of excessive submission. (29) Impatient answer. **divide,** making Ziba partner, no longer servant. (30) **all,** this shows Dav.'s error. Ziba had no more right to *half* than to all.

The king's favour is better than life (*v.* 30).—I. In the absence of Jesus what is there can make us happy and content? II. In the presence of Jesus how much previously considered needful is no longer valued.

A court preacher (*v.* 30).—Thomas Fuller, so well known as the author of the *Worthies of England*, and other works, on first coming to London, soon distinguished himself so much in the pulpits there, that he was invited by the master and brotherhood of the Savoy to be their lecturer. On the breaking out of the rebellion, and when the king left London in 1641 to raise an army, Mr. Fuller continued at the Savoy, and laboured all the while, both in public and private, to promote the cause of the king. On the anniversary of his inauguration, when the king had left London with a view to commence hostilities against the rebels, March 27, 1642, Fuller preached at Westminster Abbey a sermon from this verse. The sermon, as may well be supposed, gave great offence, and the preacher was soon afterwards forced to withdraw from London; on which, he proceeded to Oxford, to share the fortunes of the king. As Charles had heard much of his abilities in the pulpit, he was now desirous of witnessing them personally; and accordingly, Fuller preached before his majesty at St. Mary's Church. The impression which this sermon made was singular enough. In London, Fuller had been censured for being too hot a royalist; and now he was thought to show lukewarmness to the royal cause. So far was this however from being the case that he afterwards joined the royal army, and attended it from place to place, constantly exercising the duty of a chaplain; and after the battle of Chereton-Down, March 29, 1644, being left at Basing-house, he animated the garrison to so

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"Thereat he smitten was with great affright, and trembling terror did his heart appal, nor wist he what to think of that same night, nor what to say, nor what to do at all."—*Dr. Watts.*

a Morier.

Mephibosheth meets David

a "The facts related in this *v.* tend to clear Mephibosheth fr. the suspicion of unfaithfulness to David"—*Spk. Com.*

b Lit. *tripped me up.*

v. 29. *Dr. J. Lightfoot*, vii. 201.

v. 29. "This form of speech is exceedingly common when a man wishes to confirm anything, or when he wants to give weight to a promise. To show that all will be fulfilled, he says, *Nán-chon-nain-nei*, 'Oh! I have said it.'"—*Roberts.*

c Percy Anec.

Maintain your pastoral integrity and independence, lest you sear your conscience, quench the Holy Spirit, forfeit the confidence of your people, and lose the favour of God.

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Barzillai

a Ge. xlvii. 9.

v. 32. *R. Polwhele*, i. 232.

vv. 32—35. *W. F. Vance*, 229; *J. Saurin*, iv. 173.

v. 34. *J. Tidcombe*, 73; *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 336; *J. Bretland*, ii. 86; *Dr. A. Rees*, i. 408; *J. Hewlett*, 417; *T. Rogers*, i. 443; *C. Simeon*, iii. 299; *Dr. G. Townsend*, 47; *A. Williams*, i. 241; *Dr. T. F Dibden*, 463; *Dr. R. Harris*, 273; *S. Hoole*, 207.

b *Dr. J. R. Macduff.*

"Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty; for in my youth I never did apply hot and rebellious liquors in my blood; nor did not with unbashful forehead woo the means of weakness and debility; therefore my age is as a lusty winter, frosty, but kindly."—*Shakespeare.*

"His mien is lofty, his demeanour great, nor sprightly folly wantons in his air; nor dull serenity becalms his eyes, such had I trusted once as soon as seen; but cautious age suspects the flattering form, and only credits what experience tells."—*Johnson.*

"Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye."—*Shakespeare.*

"When men grow virtuous in their old age, vigorous a defence of that place, that Sir William Waller was obliged to raise the siege with considerable loss.[c]

31—35. (31) Barzillai, ch. xvii. 27. **(32) great,** in wealth and position. **(33) feed,** give honour of a seat at the royal table. **(34) long,** *etc.*,[a] too old to make such a change. **(35)** Enumeration of infirmities of great age.

Barzillai (*vv.* 31, 37, 39).—Observe concerning Barzillai—I. His pity for the fallen (2 Sa. xvii. 29). Pity for the unfortunate is one of the finest traits in the human character. II. His disinterested loyalty. Barzillai thinks not of expediency; he does what is *right*, in spite of *prudence*. III. His estimate of life. We cannot possibly pronounce on his piety. Yet we would accept his words as the apostrophe of a good and venerable old man, who takes the grand view of life as a prelude to another. Apply these words of Barzillai to—1. The young man; 2. The man of business; 3. The child of pleasure; 4. The fruitless professor.[b]

Happiness in old age (*v.* 34).—Wilberforce remarked, "I can scarcely understand why my life is spared so long, except it be to show that a man can be as happy without a fortune as with one." And soon after, when his only surviving daughter died, he writes. "I have often heard that sailors on a voyage will drink, 'Friends astern!' till they are half way over; then, 'Friends ahead!' With me it has been 'Friends ahead!' this long time."—*Old age of the good and blessed state.*—"To him," observes the biographer of Archbishop Leighton, "death had lost its sting; it was become a pleasant theme, and gave occasion to some of his most cheerful sayings. He would compare the heavy load of clay with which the soul is encumbered to the miry boots of which the traveller divests himself on finishing his journey; and he could not disguise his own wish to be speedily unclothed, instead of lingering below till his garments were worn out, or dropped off through old age. In general his temper was serene rather than gay; but his nephew states that, if ever he rose to an unusual pitch of vivacity, it was when some illness attacked him; when, from the shaking of the prison doors, he was led to hope that some of those brisk blasts would throw them open, and give him the release he coveted. Then he seemed to stand tiptoe on the margin of eternity, in a delightful amazement of spirit, eagerly waiting the summons, and feeding his soul with the prospect of immortal life and glory. Sometimes, while contemplating his future resting-place, he would break out into that noble apostrophe of pious George Herbert—

> 'Oh, let me roost and nestle there!
> Then of a sinner thou art rid,
> And I of hope and fear.'

Thus hath the prospect of speedily having done with the world, and going to be 'with Christ, which is far better,' comforted the hearts of God's people under their most overwhelming sorrows; and the same source of consolation would prove equally abundant and efficacious still, were the hearts and conversations of believers more in heaven. But alas! alas! this world is too much the home of many of God's people. They are too much engrossed with its cares, too much occupied with its pursuits, too much fascinated with its enjoyments, too sanguine in their expectations of what it is calculated to yield them; and thus, what was

intended to animate and console them under trial—the shortness of their stay where alone trial can reach them—is converted into a source of uneasiness and disquiet. Let us rouse ourselves from such earthliness; let us have our conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour; and then, in the deepest affliction, we may apply to ourselves the words of the poet—

'Though long of wind and waves the sport,
Condemned in wretchedness to roam,
Soon shalt thou reach a sheltering port,
A quiet home.'"

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36—40. (36) **such a reward,** as to make him a courtier. (37) Aged people become greatly attached to their ancestral homes. **Chimham,** his son.[a] (38) **will do,** *etc.*, Chimham seems to have received an inheritance at Bethlehem.[b] (39) **people,** meaning David's party. (40) **conducted,** taking the principal parts and positions. This gave great offence.

An old man blessed by the king (*v.* 39).—I. Respect is due to old age. (*a*) The past at the close of which it stands; (*b*) The future, to the confines of which it has come. II. The king's blessing the best one for old age. Barzillai would rejoice that he had lived to see the king—would often speak of the interview. Does the blessing of Christ rest on you old men?

The obliviousness of age.—Custom so far regulates the sentiments, at least of common minds, that I believe men may be generally observed to grow less tender, as they advance in age. He who, when life was new, melted at the loss of every companion, can look in time, without concern, upon the grave into which his last friend was thrown, and into which himself is ready to fall; not that he is more willing to die than formerly, but that he is more familiar to the death of others, and therefore is not alarmed so far as to consider how much nearer he approaches his end. But this is to submit tamely to the tyranny of accident, and to suffer our reason to lie useless. Every funeral may justly be considered as a summons to prepare for that state into which it shows us that we must sometime enter; and the summons is more loud and piercing, as the event of which it warns us is at less distance. To neglect at any time preparation for death, is to sleep on our post at a siege; but to omit it in old age, is to sleep at an attack.[c]

41—43. (41) **stole thee away,**[a] poss. no gathering of the entire nation had been called to escort the king, so the other tribes felt slighted. (42) **near of kin,** they stood upon their tribal rights. **eaten,** *etc.*, they made out that their act was one of simple duty, and did dot involve advantage over others. (43) **fiercer,**[b] harder, more bitter, in the contention following.

Rivalry (*v.* 43).—I. Both these parties professed to love the king, each had his way of showing it. II. One party displeased with the other whose way succeeded, though both aimed at the same thing. III. The successful party instead of being most rancorous should have shown the greater kindness. IV. In this way may have been sown those seeds of strife that bore such bitter fruit in Rehoboam's time.

The resentment of Israel (*r.* 41).—The pretence that the men of Judah had stolen him away was unreasonable and unjust. For while he was at Mahanaim, the tribes on that side Jordan all

Chimham

a 1 Ki. ii. 7.

b Comp. Je. xli. 17.

v. 37. *J. Grant,* 220.

"What is age but the holy place of life, chapel of ease for all men's wearied miseries? And to rob that of her ornament, it is accursed, as from a priest to steal a holy vestment, ay, and convert it to a sinful covering."—*Massinger.*

"The leaves of memory seem to make a mournful rustling in the dark."—*Longfellow.*

c Johnson.

strife between Israel and Judah

a "Got possession by stealthy, underhand proceedings."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Here was a festerment that broke out at a future day."—*Chalmers.*

"Never do anything that can denote an angry mind; for, although everybody is born with

they are merely making a sacrifice to God of the devil's leavings."—*Swift.*

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declared for him, and accompanied him to the passage of that river, and went over with him to join the rest of their brethren, who were come down to meet him; so that when they were all united at the passage of the river, there were actually present, by large deputations, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and five others, who waited on him in his march to Gilgal. The truth of the case seems to be, that the deputations from the more distant tribes, not being able to get farther than Gilgal, before the king's arrival there, envied the other tribes, and particularly that of Judah, which had the principal share in providing everything necessary for the king's passage over Jordan, and laid hold of the first opportunity to express their resentment against them. This was heightened by the imprudent haughty answer which the men of Judah made to their expostulation, that they had a peculiar right in the king, as he was near akin to them, because he was of their own tribe: and seeming to insinuate that they came voluntarily, but that the other tribes came with an expectation of being provided for at the king's expense, and hoping some donation from him, as the reward of their submission to him. This, I think, is plainly implied, when they told them: "Have we eaten at all at the king's cost? Or hath he given us any gift?" Words which seem to carry a tacit insinuation, that other tribes expected both. This reflection, and the claim of a particular interest in the king, disgusted all the other tribes in general, and disposed them to enter into violent measures to revenge themselves. David, upon the whole, seems to me to be nowise blameable on account of Sheba's revolt, but that it was occasioned by misunderstandings between the tribes themselves, which it was not at that time in his power to prevent.[c]

a certain degree of passion, and, from untoward circumstances, will sometimes feel its operation, and be what they call 'out of humour,' yet a sensible man or woman will never allow it to be discovered. Check and restrain it; never make any determination until you find it has entirely subsided; and always avoid saying anything that you may wish unsaid." — *Ld. Collingwood.*

"Contention, like a horse full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose, and borne down all before him." — *Shakespeare.*

c *Chandler.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

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Sheba and Amasa

1—5. (1) **there,** where the altercation took place. **Belial,** De. xiii. 13.[a] **Benjamite,** fr. the mountains of Ephraim. Should be a *Bichrite,* or descendant of *Becher,* son of Benjamin.[b] **to his tents,** usual watchword of insurrections. (2) **went up,** fr. Gilgal and Jordan plain. (3) **had left,** ch. xv. 16. **widowhood,** Heb. *widowhood of life:*[c] regarding them as defiled by Ab.'s sin. (4) **Amasa,** now occupying Joab's place.[d] He had not Joab's promptness or influence. (5) **tarried,** the fact is stated, but the reason not assigned.

The disputes of brethren an opportunity for the foe (*v.* 1).—Connect with last homily. I. A soft answer from Judah would have turned away the wrath of Israel. II. The resentment of Israel was as fuel for the spark of rebellion. III. It needed only a man of Belial to apply the torch and set the kingdom in a blaze. IV. The same principle will apply to parties in politics—to churches—to families.

No part in David (*v.* 1).—When slaves are liberated from their owners, they say, "We have no *pangu, i.e.* part, in them, nor they in us." It is also very common to mention the name of the person, and that of his father; and this sometimes implies disgrace, especially when the family has arisen from obscurity, and therefore to allude to its origin is to insult the descendants.—

a 2 Sa. xvi. 7, xxii. 5. "The usual term of invective cast in and fro between the various parties in the state." —*Stanley.*

b Ge. xlvi. 21; 1 Chr. vii. 6—8.

c "Ineligible for re-marriage."—*Ewald.*

d As having led Ab.'s force it might be supposed Judah would quickly respond to his call.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

e *Roberts.*

Living in widowhood (*v.* 3).—In China, when an emperor dies, all his women are removed to an edifice called the Palace of Chastity, situated within the walls of the palace, in which they are shut up for the remainder of their lives.*f*

6–10. (6) **Abishai,** putting a new slight on Joab.[a] **fenced cities,** involving the perils and anxieties of siege. It was important to nip this sudden insurrection in the bud. (7) **Cherethites,** *etc.* ch. viii. 18. (8) **Gibeon,** *El Jib,* 5 or 6 m. NN.W. of Jerus. **went before,** better advanced to meet: or hurriedly overtook them.[b] **fell out,** of its sheath, wh. was fastened to the girdle.[c] (9) **by the beard,** this action would hide the left-handed thrust. A mode of friendly salutation. (10) **fifth rib, ch. ii. 23. so,** better *and.*

How is it with your soul? (*v.* 9).—We shall isolate these words, "Art thou in health," etc., from the context, using them in relation to spiritual health. There is abundant reason for our solicitude. A lack of spiritual health implies unhappiness. The backslider is necessarily miserable. Propound the question to some, who—I. Though in health, answer dubiously. The aged often draw mistaken conclusions from the fact that—1. Their feelings are not so intense as they were. The question is, Are you making progress? not, Are you as enthusiastic as when you started? Feeling is a sun-dial, God's Word the unalterable timepiece; 2. Their prayers seem unanswered. The woman of Canaan. At first, "not a word." Yet afterwards Christ said, "Woman, great is thy faith:" 3. Their labours are less abundant (see Nu. viii. 25). II. Though lacking health, reply in the affirmative. Because—1. No outward marks. The deadliest form of the plague that ravaged London was that which gave the least sign. Heart disease exists while the body is hale and strong; 2. No fear of immediate danger. All departures from God are dangerous, and result in sorrow. III. Knowing their state aright, answer in the negative. Let us—1. Inquire as to your symptoms. As to—(1) Your pulse. Is it vigorous, or has joy fled, and zeal gone? (2) Your tongue. Is it clean? (3) Your appetite. Does it loath wholesome fare? (4) Your spirits. Do they flag? Are you peevish? (5) Your strength. Have you no ability to give, to work, to obey? (6) Your memory. Are past mercies, past trials, forgotten; 2. Prescribe some remedies. Don't think lightly of your case. Nor yield to despair. (1) Avoid all that disagrees with your health: carnal pleasures, evil companions. (2) Seek solitude. Be often alone with the Good Physician. Virtue goeth out of Him. (3) Take freely of bitter herbs; meditations on apostasy — Judas. Demas. Think how you grieve Christ and the Church. (4) Take the balm of Gilead. The doctrine of God's unchanging love, His encouraging promises. (5) Take plenty of exercise. Attend the means of grace; go into the vineyard.[d]

Kissing the beard (*v.* 9).—D'Arvieux was present at an Arabian entertainment, to which came all the emirs, a little while after his arrival, accompanied by their friends and attendants: and after the usual civilities, caresses, kissings of the beard, and of the hand, which every one gave and received according to his rank and dignity, sat down upon mats. It was in this way, perhaps, that Joab pretended to testify his respect for Amasa, his rival in the favour of the king; he took him by the beard to

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vv. 1, 2. *Dr. D. Waterland.* viii. 386; *H. Lindsay,* ii. 240.

f Burder.

Joab slays Amasa and pursues Sheba

a "Prob. as the king was on bad terms with Joab, and wished to deprive him of his post as captain of the host, he gave his orders to Abishai, and weakly connived at the execution of them by Joab, which was inevitable."—*Spk. Com.*

b Jamieson, Kitto.

c "As if by accident, but, in reality, this was so contrived by Joab, in order that he might use it against Amasa without putting him on his guard by drawing it fr. the scabbard."—*Wordsworth.*

d R. A. Griffin.

e Paxton.

"Malice is the devil's picture. Lust makes men brutish, and malice makes them devilish. Malice is mental murder: you may kill a man and never touch him; 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.'"—*T. Watson.*

"Malice is a settled or deliberate determination to revenge or do hurt to another. It more frequently denotes the disposition of inferior minds to execute every purpose of mischief within the

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more limited circle of their abilities."—*C. Buck.*

"Malice scorn'd puts out itself; but argued, gives a kind of credit to a false accusation."—*Massinger.*

"The history of the world tells us that immoral means will ever intercept good ends."—*Coleridge.*

kiss him, or agreeably to the custom of these emirs, or Arabian chieftains, to kiss the beard itself; and in this stooping posture he could much better see to direct the blow, than if he had only held his beard, and raised himself to kiss his face; while Amasa, charmed by this high compliment, which was neither suspicious nor unusual, and undoubtedly returning it with corresponding politeness, paid no attention to the sword in the hand of his murderer. It is extremely probable that Judas betrayed his Lord in the same way, by kissing his beard. The evangelists Matthew and Mark say, that he came directly to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him; but Luke seems to hint, that Judas saluted him with more respect. Jesus, according to Matthew, had time to say, before he received the kiss from Judas, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" and while Judas was kissing His beard, Jesus might express Himself with great ease and propriety, as Luke relates, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"[e]

Joab besieges Beth-maachah

11—15. (11) men, servants. **by him,** body of Amasa. **for David,** insinuating the disloyalty of Amasa. (12) **wallowed,** *v.* 10.[a] **stood still,**[b] as ch. ii. 23: this nearly spoiled Joab's expedition. (13) **after Joab,** the well-known leader. (14) **Abel of Beth-maachah,** should be one word: a town in the N.W. of Palestine,[c] in tribe of Dan: it was fortified. **Berites,** inhabitants of the district: or it may refer to fortresses[d] of N. Palestine. (15) **bank,** on which to plant engines. **trench,**[e] fortified space outside the wall.

Removing hindrances to popularity (*v.* 12).—I. We have the people filled with horror at the sight of one dead man. They could not advance with that corpse in the way. II. In the path of progress are many who are morally dead. They block the way. III. The dead must be removed to make way for the march of living men.

Excitement of popularity.—

> Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
> To gaze in's eyes and bless him. Maidens wave
> Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy;
> While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
> The gilded equipage, and, turning loose
> His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.[f]

the head of Sheba sent to Joab

a 2 Sa. xiv. 2.

Historic parallels: Joab sends a wise woman to the king: now receives instruction from one himself. Sheba slain by a woman: so, too, was Abimelech, Sisera, etc.

"Intrepidity is an extraordinary strength of mind, which raises it

16—22. (16) **wise woman,** a person of some authority and influence. (17) **near,** as near as was safe. (18) **ask at Abel,** this was a proverb based on the traditional wisdom of the people at Abel. Joab had not asked whether they agreed with Sheba. (19) **I,** perhaps she was judge, or ruler, of the city. (20) Joab was willing to slay for necessity or policy, but not naturally a blood-thirsty man. (21) **deliver him,** the fight was only to secure a traitor. (22) **in her wisdom,** persuading them to sacrifice one who was really their enemy.

Traditional wisdom (*v.* 18).—I. Quite a number of curious proverbs have been originated by the situation and character of places. II. Here is a place which of old time was famous for its wisdom. Now its reputation for wisdom is maintained by one—a woman. III. Her shrewdness suggests a way out of a great war. She would discover the reason of the siege, and then raised the siege by delivering Sheba.

a Fr. Old Eng. *walwe*; A. S. *wealwian*, to roll oneself about, as in mire.

b "As the army came up, every one halted at the ghastly sight. Its removal broke the spell."—*Stanley.*

c "Now called *Abel-el-Kaneh*, on east side of stream *Deddan*, above the waters of Merom."—*Wordsworth.*

d Spk. Com.

e The Pomœrium.

f Cowper.

The city of Abel (*v.* 18).—Intimating that the city of Abel was very famous, in ancient times, for giving advice, and determining controversies. But of this there is no intimation except in this place, and the sense seems very forced and unnatural. I think R. S. Jarchi's exposition leads to the true interpretation, which our learned Bishop Patrick seems also to approve; who observes, that the Hebrew word refers, not to old time, but the beginning of the siege. As if she had said, When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, surely they will ask us, if we will have peace, and then we shall soon come to an agreement, and make an end; putting Joab in mind of the rule in the law, Deut. xx. 10, which commands them to offer peace to the cities of other nations, when they came to besiege them, and therefore much more to a city of their own, as Abel was. This agrees well with what follows, that they were a peaceable people, and faithful to their prince, and therefore would not have refused to yield to him upon summons.[b]

23–26. (23) **all the host,** Dav. dared not remove him. **Benaiah,** ch. viii. 18. (24) **Adoram,** or Adoniram, 1 Ki. iv. 6. **tribute,** or revenues. **recorder,**[a] or remembrancer, or historian. (25) **Sheva,** or Seraiah. (26) **chief ruler,** ch. viii. 18, comp. ch. xxiii. 38, perhaps *Jairite* should be *Ithrite*.

David's officers.—I. In the government of a kingdom it is needful to have office well distributed. (1) Monopoly of power prevented; (2) Inconvenience arising out of the death of one holding many offices; (3) He who has but one office will discharge the duty of it better; (4) This applies also to offices in the Church. II. Self is a kingdom wherein memory is the scribe, and conscience the recorder, etc. All members have not the same office, etc.

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above the troubles and disorders, and the emotions, which the sight of great perils is calculated to excite. It is by this that heroes maintain themselves in a tranquil state of mind, and preserve the free use of their reason under the most surprising and terrible circumstances." — *La Rochefoucauld.*

b Chandler.

David's officers

a 2 Sa. viii. 16—18.

"As islands stand in grand solitude in the midst of seas, so great minds dwell alone amid the little souls which fill the circles of life." — *Dr. Thomas.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

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1–6. (1) **days of David,**[a] the time of it is not fixed. **bloody house,** family on wh. rests the guilt of shedding innocent blood. **slew,** *etc.*, not else narrated. (2) **had sworn,** Jos. ix. 15. **zeal,** one of his fits of religious mania. (3) **atonement,** reconciliation. (4) no money payments in compensation, but blood for blood. (5) **the man,** avenging of blood must be taken of the family of the murderer. (6) **seven,** treated as a perfect number. **hang them up,** after death; not put to death by hanging.[b]

Famine a punishment for sin (*v.* 1).—The history teaches us—I. In what light we should view public calamities. II. The way in which we may get them removed. We should—1. Inquire into their sinful causes; 2. Put away whatever is displeasing to God.[c]

Spurious zeal (*v.* 2).—Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and His Gospel, which is nothing else but our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for "fire from heaven" to censure those who differ a little from us in their apprehensions. It is like that kind of lightning (which the philosophers speak of) which melts the sword within, but singeth

the three years' famine

a "This chap. appears to come from a different source." — *Spk. Com.*

b Nu. xxv. 4; De. xxi. 22.

See *Bp. Hall, Contemp.*

v. 1. *W. Gouge, God's Three Arrows*, 129; *W. Reading*, ii. 378; *J. Fawcett*, iii. 271; *H. Lindsay*, ii. 254; *Bp. Armstrong*, 210.

c C. Simeon.

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d Cudworth.

the sons of Rizpah

a Ge. xxxvi. 24.

b 1 Sa. xviii. 19.

c "The rain came to the thirsty land as token of forgiveness." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 10. *R. Warner,* fol. 1; *H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* ii. 256.

v. 10. "Speaking of a great precipice near Bylan, Mr. Parsons says, 'three loaded camels fell down the precipice, and were killed on the spot, in my remembrance; and what is very remarkable, in less than thirty hours after their loads were taken off, there was not left a piece of flesh, but all was devoured by the vultures in the day, and the beasts of prey, mostly jackals, in the night.'" — *Burder*

d Harmer.

David buries the remains of Saul and Jonathan

a Excited by Rizpah's example to do honour to bodies of Saul and Jonathan.

vv. 11—14. *J. H. Pott,* ii. 176.

When Dr. Johnson died many began to revile him; and Dr Parr said, "Ah now that the old lion is dead, every ass thinks he may kick at him".

not the scabbard: it strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body.[d]

7—11. (7) **Lord's oath,** 1 Sa. xviii. 3, xx. 8, 42. (8) **Rizpah,** ch. iii. 7. **Aiah,** is a foreign (Horite) name.[a] **Michal,** should be *Merab.*[b] marg. Michal's sister. (9) **in the hill,** *v.* 6. (10) **water dropped,**[c] if the rains of October, she watched six months: or special rain may have been sent. (11) **told Dav.,** her devotion exciting attention.

Rizpah watching the slain (*v.* 10).—I. Should we in our love for the Crucified One be outdone by the love of Rizpah for the slain? Shall we weary of considering His pains? II. Should we not treat worldly and sinful thoughts as Rizpah did the birds of the air? III. Should not we bravely contend with the foes of Jesus, as she with the beasts?

Heavy rain in the East (*vv.* 9, 10).—Such a late spring rain would have been attended, as the rain at Sidon was, with many advantages; and coming after all hope of common rain was over, and presently following the death of these persons on the other hand, would be a much more merciful management of Providence, and a much nobler proof that the execution was the appointment of God, and not a political stratagem of David, than the passing of six months over without any rain at all, and then its falling only in the common track of things. This explanation also throws light on the closing part of this story, "And after that God was entreated for the land." Dr. Delaney seems to suppose that the performing these funeral rites was requisite to the appeasing God: but could that be the meaning of the clause? Were the ignominy of a death the law of Moses pronounced accursed, and the honour of a royal funeral, both necessary mediums of appeasing the Almighty? Is it not a much easier interpretation of this clause, The rain that dropped on these bodies was a great mercy to the country, and the return of the rains in due quantities afterward, in their season, proved that God had been entreated for the land?[d]

12—14. (12) **went,** did not merely send, but went himself.[a] **Jabesh,** 1 Sa. xxxi. 11—13. (13) **them . . hanged,** *v.* 9. (14) **Zelah,** Jos. xviii. 28.

Animosity ends in the grave (*v.* 14).—I. Considering what David had suffered at the hands of Saul this was noble on his part. Compare with the exhuming and hanging of Cromwell. II. Learn the folly of that little spite which pursues even the dead with its harmless hate.

Beth-shan (*v.* 12).—Calmet says on this, "House, or temple of the tooth, or of ivory; from beth. *a house,* and shen, *a tooth.* This title means, no doubt, simply the temple of the tooth, but we have no reason to conclude that a tooth only was worshipped in any temple in Canaan; it must have been the symbol of some deity." Calmet then proceeds to show that this may have been the god Ganesa of the East, who is represented with an elephant's head, and supposes the tusks are alluded to by the tooth. I am not aware, however, of any such distinction being made in that deity, and think it unlikely that his tusk would give the name to a temple. Is it not a curious fact, that the tooth of Buddha is the most sacred and precious relic, in the opinion of the inhabitants of Siam, of the Burman Empire, and

of Ceylon? That tooth is kept in the temple of Kandy, the capital of Ceylon. Buddhism is the religion of China, and of those countries alluded to, and it was formerly the religion of multitudes in India.[b]

15–18. (15) war again, time referred to cannot be fixed. waxed faint, so was in some peril. (16) **Ishbi-benob,**[a] *i.e. whose dwelling is at Nob.* the giant, *Na-haphah.*[b] (17) no more go out, this explains ch. xviii. 3. (18) at Gob, same as Gezer, or near it,[c] mod. *El Kubab*, 4 m. E. of Joppa. **Sibbechai,** comp. ch. xxiii. 27.

David and the giants (*v.* 16).—**I.** Compare the two giants Goliath and Ishbi-benob. Goliath the greater, his spear twice the weight. II. Compare David at the two periods of his life. Then a stripling: forty years had passed. he is now an old man, but brave as ever. III. Giants to fight all through life, we must be brave in youth if we conquer in old age. IV. Lesser giants at the end of life more difficult to overcome than greater ones at the first. V. But God giveth the victory in youth and age.

The great Duke of Argyle.—At the siege of Mons during the glorious career of Marlborough, the Duke of Argyle joined an attacking corps when it was on the point of shrinking from the contest; and pushing among them, open-breasted, he exclaimed. "You see, brothers, I have no concealed armour; I am equally exposed with you; I require none to go where I shall refuse to venture. Remember you fight for the liberties of Europe, and the glory of your nation, which shall never suffer by my behaviour: and I hope the character of a Briton is as dear to every one of you." This spirit animated the soldiers; the assault was made, and the work was carried.[d]

19–22. (19) Comp. 1 Chr. xx. 5, where the name is given as *Lahmi*. **Oregim,** means *of weavers*, poss. name added after his son's exploit.[a] (20) Evidently a monster: not more efficient bec. having six fingers and toes. (21) **defied,** as 1 Sa. xvii. 26. **Shimeah,** ch. xiii. 3. (22) **four,** comp. 1 Chr. xx. 8.

Confidence in animal courage and brute force.—**I.** This confidence is characteristic of semi-barbarous people. II. The vanity of it is manifested by men of faith. III. The history is suggestive of the triumph of mind over matter, of right over might, of truth over mal-formed error.

Description of a giant.— "There was one
Who when I saw him first sat by a fire:
An egg, an hour-glass and a water bowl
Being before him. All he said was this:—
When the sand is run
The egg is done.
This he first boiled, then roasted, and then ate.
Student. What sort of one? Perhaps an ostrich egg?
Festus. Much larger. Here is nothing of the kind.
The yolk was like the sun seen in a fog:
The white was thin and clouded, and the shell
Heavy and hard as is our earth-pie crust.
A wheat-stack of our friend's here would but make
One loaf of bread for them. Oak trees they use
As pickles, and tall pines as toothpicks; whales,
In their own blubber fried, serve as mere fish

B.C. *cir.* 1021.

b Roberts.

David and Ishbi-benob

a Comp. Goliath, 1 Sa. xvii.

b Ge. xiv. 5; De. ii. 10, 20, iii. 13; Jos. xii. 4, etc.

c Jos. x. 33; 1 Chr. xx. 4.

"As Christ was both a Lamb and a Lion, so is every Christian: a lamb for patience in suffering and innocence of life; a lion for boldness in his innocency. I would so order my courage and mildness that I may be neither lion-like in my conversation nor sheepish in the defence of a good cause."—*Bp. Hall.*

d Percy Anec.

the giants of Philistia

a Wordsworth.

"Physical courage is chiefly a constitutional endowment, though it may be cultivated by judicious training. It is that unflinching steadiness of nerve which impelled Putnam to enter the wolf's den, and face the greedy brute in his very lair. It is a sentiment which renders an individual superior to a feeling of personal danger. It peculiarly befits the soldier and the seaman, and all who are called upon to exercise cool judgment in situations of

B.C. *cir.* 1021.

To bait their appetites. Boiled elephants,
Rhinoceroses, and roasted crocodiles—
Everything dished up whole—with lions stewed,
Shark sauce, and eagle pie, and young giraffes,
Make up a potluck dinner,—if there's plenty.
Then as for game, the pterodactyls
And ichthyosauri are great dainties there.
Coming in season only once an age.
They reckon there by ages, not by years.
Student. And as to beverage?
Festus. Oh; if thirsty, they
Will lay them down and drink a river dry,
Nor once draw breath.
Parson. Ah! camel, gnat, and all."[b]

peril." — *S. G. Goodrich.*

b Baileys.

"A great mind, like a great ship, cannot move in shallow water. Give it sea depth, and sea room, and it shall bear cargoes to serve the nations." — *Dr. Thomas.*

B.C. 1018.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

David's song of praise

1—4. (1) **this song,**[a] comp. Ps. xviii. (2) **rock,** Heb. *sela*, a high cliff or crag, sought for refuge. (3) **rock,** Heb. *tsur*, something solid, firm, unmovable. **shield,** as Ge. xv. 1; De. xxxiii. 29. **horn,**[b] symbol of strength: the horn of the animal is his strength and defence. (4) **call on,** with the language of trust and thanksgiving.

David's song of victory (*v.* 4).—Compare with ordinary songs of triumph in which national heroes are lauded. I. David's resolution: "I will call, etc." II. David's reason: "Who is worthy, etc." He had learned this (*a*) from a study of the Divine character, (*b*) from a review of past history. III. David's confidence: "So shall I, etc." Whatever (*a*) their individual strength, or (*b*) their collective numbers.

5—9. (5) **waves,** in psalm, *sorrows*, Heb. *cords*, fig. of hunter's net. **ungodly,** of Belial. (6) **sorrows,** *cords:* matching the word *snares*. (7) **temple,** Heaven as God's dwelling-place realised by man. (8) Strong poetic fig. of the commotion of war. (9) **out of,** *by* his, *v.* 15, sign of anger.

Out of the depths (*v.* 7).—I. Our God is one who may be confidently approached in great extremities. II. He ought, therefore, to be served at all times. III. The cry of distressed souls mourning their sin and weakness is heard in heaven.

The snares of death (*v.* 6).—This is an illusion to the ancient manner of hunting, which is still practised in some countries, and was performed by surrounding a considerable tract of ground by a circle of nets, and afterward contracting the circle by degrees, till they had forced all the beasts of that quarter together into a narrow compass, and then it was that the slaughter began. This manner of hunting was used in Italy of old, as well as all over the Eastern parts of the world, and it was from this custom that the poets sometimes represented Death as surrounding persons with his nets, and as encompassing them on every side.[a]

10—13. (10) **bowed,** as in storm the clouds come down lower. **darkness,** of the black storm-cloud. (11) **cherub,**[a] fig. of the wind, as a servant of God or His chariot. Second clauses of *v.* in this song often explain figures of the first clauses.

a "It belongs to early part of Dav.'s reign, when he was recently established upon the throne of Israel, and his triumph over his enemies was still fresh."—*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Sa. ii. 1, 10; Lu. i. 69.

vv. 1—3. *Bp. Tomline, A Ser.* (1798). *vv.* 2—3. *Bp. E. Smith* (1698).

v. 5. *Dr R. Taylor*, iii. 320.

"Mediocrity is not allowed to poets, either by the gods or men."—*Horace.*

a Burder.

a "A word of Egyptian origin, but difficult to explain. It has no Semitic ety-

(12) **pavilions**, royal tents.[b] **dark waters**, Heb. binding of water. (13) **brightness**, of lightning.

The wind.—

North winds send hail, south winds bring rain,
East winds we bewail, west winds blow amain;
North-east is too cold, south-east not too warm,
North-west is too bold, south-west doth no harm.

The north is a noyer to grass of all suites,
The east a destroyer to herb and all fruits;
The south, with his showers, refresheth the corn,
The west, to all flowers, may not be forborne.

The west, as a father, all goodness doth bring,
The east, a forbearer no manner of thing;
The south, as unkind, draweth sickness too near,
The north, as a friend, maketh all again clear.

With temperate wind, we be blessed of God,
With tempest we find, we are beat with His rod;
All power, we know, to remain in His hand
However wind blow, by sea or by land.

Though winds do rage as winds were wood,
And cause spring tides to raise great flood,
And lofty ships leave anchor in mud,
Bereaving many of life and of blood;

Yet true it is, as cow chews cud,
And trees, at spring, do yield forth bud,
Except wind stands, as never it stood,
It is an ill wind turns none to good.[c]

14–19. (14) Thunder regarded by pious soul is the voice of God. (15) Some of the figures may be taken from the scene of the Exodus. (16) **channels**, *etc.*, as Ex. xiv. 21, 22. **blast**, *etc.* comp. Ex. xiv. 21. (17) **took me**, passing from historical to personal references. (18) **strong enemy**, Saul. (19) **prevented**,[a] *v.* 6.

The arrows of the Almighty (*v.* 15).—I. Are numerous, many have sped, others on the string, the quiver yet well supplied. II. Far-flying. Few could use the bow of Robin Hood; but who can send an arrow so far as God? III. Well-aimed. Men may draw a bow at a venture: with them it is often hit or miss. With God there is no chance work. The statue of Apollo Belvedere represents the god with a bow in his hand from which the arrow has flown, and on his face a look of scorn for the fugitive who thought to escape him. IV. Happy are those who are wounded by the arrow of truth before they are struck by the arrow of death.

Arrows of conviction (*v.* 15).—The means employed, by the blessing of God, to make sinners acquainted with their sinfulness and danger, and to lead them to implore His mercy, are various. To some He speaks in the thunders of His law; others are attracted by the soothing sound of His Gospel; while the elements of nature itself have sometimes been the means of exciting attention and deep feeling. The excellent Isaac Ambrose, in his *Treatise on Angels*, gives an account of a profane persecutor, who was brought to seek the mercy of God in a remarkable

B.C. *cir.* 1018.

mology." — *Perionne.*

[b] In contrast with the temple, *v.* 7, this indic. God's *temporary* abode.

[c] *Tusser.*

"Eternity is a pre-eminent mode of the essence of God, by which it is devoid of time with regard to the term or limits of beginning and end, because it is of infinite being; it is also devoid of time with regard to the succession of former and latter, of past and future, because it is of simple being, which is never in [*potentia*] capability, but always in act." — *Arminius.*

[a] *Præ*, before, and *venire*, to come. This word has changed its meaning now to *hinder*: in Scrip. it is rather *get beforehand.*

The presence of God's glory is in heaven; the presence of His power on earth; the presence of His justice in hell, and the presence of His grace with His people. If he deny us His powerful presence we fall into nothing; if He deny us His gracious presence, we fall into sin; if He deny us His merciful presence, we fall into hell.

B.C. *cir.* 1018.

How many Gods are there? was once said to a little boy. "One." "How do you know there is only one?" "Because there is no room for more, for the one God fills heaven and earth."

manner. He was out on a journey, with his pious wife, when they were overtaken with a storm of thunder and lightning. He was seized with great terror, and his wife inquired into its cause. "Why," asked he, "are not you afraid?" She replied, "No, not at all; for I know it is the voice of my heavenly Father; and shall a child be afraid of a kind father's voice?" The man began to reflect, that Christians must have within them a Divine principle, of which the world is ignorant, or they could not enjoy such calmness when the rest of the world were filled with horror. He went to Mr. Bolton, an eminent minister, to whom he had been opposed, acknowledged and lamented his sins, and furnished good evidence of a change of heart.

a Ps. xv.

b Ps. xxiv. 3, 4.

God shows mercy, not because we have a will to receive it, but because He has a will to bestow it.

20—25. (20) **large place,** "open ground, not full of floods and nets." (21) **righteousness,**[a] uprightness. **cleanness of hands,**[b] must have been written before Dav.'s sad fall. (22) **wickedly,** *wilfully:* Dav. distinguishes sins of human frailty, from sins of self-will. (23) **judgments,** as found in His word. (24) **upright,** comp. Gen. xvii. 1. **iniquity,** besetting sin, inward tendency to sin. (25) Comp. *v.* 21.

A large place for the children of God (*v.* 20).—I. In their natural state they are cabined, cribbed, confined. Hedged in by doubt, fear, habit, etc. II. Their deliverance from this condition can come only from one quarter—God. III. When He delivers He brings into the wide place of (*a*) liberty, (*b*) grace, (*c*) safety, (*d*) joy, (*e*) hope.

a Ma. v. 7.

b Ma. v. 8.

c Ps. cxix. 105.

d 2 Sa. vii. 8.

"No man ever thought too highly of his nature or too meanly of himself."—*Young.*

26—30. (26) **merciful,**[a] as a king should be: word better rendered, *gracious.* (27) **pure,** sincere-hearted.[b] **unsavoury,** Heb. *wilt wrestle,* in Ps. xviii. word is *froward.* (28) **eyes are upon,** though He may delay judgment, God sees and knows. (29) **lamp,** familiar fig. in Ps.[c] (30) **wall,** the battlements of a besieged city.[d]

The good man's lamp (*v.* 29).—I. The good man is sometimes in darkness (*a*) through his own sins, (*b*) fears, (*c*) enemies. II. He has a lamp in his darkness, (*a*) not self-created. (*b*) not a Divinely kindled creature comfort, (*c*) but God Himself—the Father of Lights. III. By this lamp the darkness itself is lightened, (*a*) other lamps burn dimly in it, (*b*) serve to make the darkness visible, (*c*) this turns night into day, sorrow into joy, fear into hope.

a "The sacred writers frequently mention gazelles under the various names of harts, roes, and hinds. They are celebrated for their activity (Ge xlv. 21; 2 Sa. ii. 18). I have often stopped to admire the grace, ease and fearless security with wh. these pretty creatures bound along the high places of the

31—35. (31) **way,** of dealing with His people. **tried,** *refined;* idea, well tested by experience of His people. **buckler,** lighter kind of shield. (32) **who is God?** comp. Moses' song, De. xxxii. **rock,** word *tsur,* as *v.* 3. (33) **my way,** the path I should take plain; removing difficulties. (34) **hind's feet,** the gazelle is referred to.[a] (35) **bow of steel,** or bronze.[b]

God's way (*v.* 31).—This the language of one who was saint, poet, hero, prince. Testimony of such a man worth having. It may apply to two things. I. The way which God prescribes "perfect." Perfect is the way prescribed for—1. Our moral conduct; 2. Our spiritual restoration: this way is perfect in wisdom, in justice, in sufficiency. II. The way He pursues: "perfect." His way is perfect in—1. Conception, 2. Execution. A conviction of the perfection of God's way—(1) Is essential to our well-being; (2) Is the most attainable of beliefs; (3) Must flash on every sinner's nature sooner or later.[c]

The bow (*v.* 35).—We learn from Homer, that the Grecian bow was at first made of horn, and tipped with gold. But the material of which it was fabricated, seems for the most part to have been wood, which the workman frequently adorned with gold and silver. One of these ornamented weapons procured for Apollo, a celebrated Cretan, the significant name of Ἀργυροτόξος, the bearer of the silver-studded bow. But the Asiatic warrior often used a bow of steel or brass, which, on account of its great stiffness, he bent with his foot. Those that were made of horn or wood probably required to be bent in the same way: for the Hebrew always speaks of treading his bow, when he makes ready for the battle; and to tread and bend the bow are in all the writings of the Old Testament convertible phrases. The bow of steel is distinctly mentioned by the Hebrew bard: "He teaches my hand to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms." This was a proof of great strength, and of uncommon success in war, which he ascribes with equal piety and gratitude to the infinite power and goodness of Jehovah. To bend the bow, was frequently proposed as a trial of strength. After Ulysses had bent his bow, which all the suitors of Penelope had tried in vain, he boasted to his son Telemachus of the deed, because it was an undeniable proof that he had not lost his ancient vigour, in which he was accustomed to glory. Herodotus relates, that when Cambyses sent his spies into the territories of Ethiopia, the king of that country, well understanding the design of their visit, thus addressed them: "When the Persians can easily draw bows of this largeness, then let them invade the Ethiopians." He then unstrung the bow, and gave it to them to carry to their master. The Persians themselves, according to Xenophon, carried bows three cubits in length. If these were made of steel or brass, which are both mentioned in the sacred volume, and of a thickness proportioned to their length, they must have been very dangerous weapons even in close fight; and as such they are represented by the prophet Isaiah: "Their bows also shall dash the young men in pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children." In time of peace, or when not engaged with the enemy, the Oriental warriors carried their bow in a case, sometimes of cloth, but more commonly of leather, hung to their girdles. When it was taken from the case, it was said, in the language of Habakkuk, to be "made quite naked."[d]

36—40. (36) **gentleness,** gracious condescension. **great,** or multiplied me. (37) **enlarged,**[a] given me room to move. Thinking of the contrast bet. his persecution time and his kingship. **feet,** Heb. *ankles.* (38) **turned not again,** in even temporary defeat. (39) **consumed,** some; **wounded** others. (40) **Thou hast,** directly tracing his victories to God.

Divine gentleness (*v.* 36).—I. Types of the gentleness of God. The gentleness of—1. The shepherd; 2. The philanthropist; 3. The teacher; 4. The father; 5. The husband. II. Instances of this gentleness, as seen in the life of Christ. 1. His discourse with Nicodemus (Jo. iii. 1—21); 2. His treatment of the woman taken in adultery (Jo. viii. 2—11); 3. His behaviour to Martha and Mary (Lu. x. 38—42); 4. His gentleness at the supper (Jo. xiii. 23); 5. On the cross (Lu. xxiii. 34); 6. After His resurrection (Mk. xvi. 7, see outline, B.M., N.T., i. 373). III.

B.C. *cir.* 1018.

mountains." — *Thomas n.*

b "Bronze, highly tempered and elastic, not steel or brass, was used for bows by the Egyptians and Israelites."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 33. *Dr. H. Turner, On the Collects,* ii. 336.

c Dr. Thomas.

A gentleman being invited by an honourable personage to see a stately building erected by Sir Christopher Hatton, he desired to be excused, and to sit still, looking on a flower which he held in his hand: "For," said he, "I see more beauty of God in this flower, than in all the beautiful edifices in the world."

d Paxton.

a Clearing away hindrances.

We are encompassed by mercies on every side. At every time, and in every thing, God has given us instances of His goodness. Every season has returned with its proper blessing; every day with its needful supply, and every week with its hallowed day of rest.

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Occasions when most manifested in our experience. In—1. Times of affliction; 2. Times of labour; 3. Times of disappointment; 4. The hour of death. IV. Effects produced by this gentleness: "made me great," or "multiplied me." Multiplied—1. My graces; 2. My gifts; 3. My hopes; 4. My labours.[b]

41—46. (41) **necks,** Jos. x. 24; Ex. xxiii. 27. (42) **unto the Lord,** they received no answer, bec. through Dav. they were coming under Div. judgment for their sins. (43) Comp. war of Ammon.[a] (44) **my people,** the difficulties of his motley company in the hold; and the siding of northern tribes with house of Saul. **head of the heathen,** or the nations. (45) **submit,** marg. yield feigned obedience: lie to me. (46) **close places,** hiding places; or closed, fortified cities.

A Messianic prediction (*v.* 44).—The missionary enterprise—I. Is sometimes hindered by the strivings of the people of God (Ill. Madagascar), men more zealous for forms and sects than for Christ and His truth. II. Deliverance from these strivings promotes Christ to the head of the heathen. Then "blessings abound wherever He reigns." III. When Christ is at the head, those who once knew Him not are led most joyfully to serve Him.

Necks of enemies (*v.* 41).—The neck is often used for the whole body, and in threatenings, it is the part mentioned. A proprietor of slaves is said to have their necks. To a person going among wicked or cruel people it is said, "Go not there, your *puddara, i.e* neck, or nape, will be given to them." "Depend upon it, government will have it out of the necks of those smugglers." "Have you paid Chinnan the money?" "No, nor will I pay him." "Why?" "Because he has had it out of my neck." When two men have been fighting, the conqueror may be seen to seize the vanquished by the neck, and thrust him to the ground.[b]

47—51. (47) **liveth,** comp. Ps. xlii. 2, 8. **rock,** *v.* 3. (48) **avengeth me,** is my *goel;* undertakes my case. (49) **violent man,** Saul. (50) **heathen,** surrounding nations should distinctly understand that he attributed all his successes to Jehovah his God, not to prowess, or army. (51) **tower of salvation,**[a] giving security and stability. **for evermore, O. T.** expression for our *permanently, for a long time.*

The Rock of Salvation (*v.* 47) is the Rock of Ages.—I. This Rock was provided by Divine mercy, comprehending all human need, in ages long past. II. It is designed as a place of refuge for all the ages to come. III. There is a cleft in the Rock into which sinners in all lands and ages may run and be safe.

The Rock of Salvation (*v.* 47).—Men who stand on any other foundation than the rock Christ Jesus are like birds who build their nests in trees by the side of rivers. The bird sings in the branches, and the river sings below; but, all the while, the waters are undermining the soil about the roots, till, in some unsuspected hour, the tree falls with a crash into the stream: and then the nest is sunk, the home is gone, and the bird is a wanderer. But birds that hide their young in the clefts of the rocks are undisturbed, and after every winter, coming again, they find their nests awaiting them, and all their life long brood in the same places, undisturbed by stream or storm.[b]

b R. A. Griffin.

a 1 Sa. xii. 29—31.

v. 44. *R. Synge, Ser. on Loyalty,* 79.

"In such multitudes of God's mercies as you enjoy, marvel not that you have some crosses, lest we should presume: likewise blessings with crosses, lest we should despair — and in any outward blessing which you see you cannot have, beseech God you may never be vexed for it."—*Greenham.*

b Roberts.

a This is the only passage in which Dav. names himself.

"The question whether the text of the Ps. is more ancient or more accurate in the Bk. of Sam. or in the Bk. of Ps. has been much discussed. The most natural and prob. explan. is, that David, towards the close of his reign, prepared a revision for public recitation."—*Spk. Com.*

b H. W. Beecher.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

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1—7. (1) **last words,**[a] as a prophet, and poet, his last song or psalm. **son of Jesse,** his usual designation.[b] **sweet psalmist,** *lit.* he that is pleasant with the Psalms, "darling of the songs of his people." (2) **Spirit,** Ex. xxxi. 3. (3) **Rock,** ch. xxii. 2, 3, *tsur.* (4) **tender grass,** comp. Ps. lxxii. 6; Is. xliv. 3, 4. (5) Better read, "Is not so my house with God" that He has made, *etc.*[c] **although,** or *will he not make it to grow?* (6) **thorns,** contrast with wheat. Ps. cxxix. 7. (7) **fenced,** guarded fr. their prickliness. **burned,** comp. Matt. iii. 10—12.

David's sorrow and resource (*v.* 5).—Consider—I. David's domestic sorrow: "my house is not with God." II. His personal resource: God's covenant relation to him. Look at this covenant in—1. Its duration: everlasting; 2. Its completeness: "ordered in all things;" 3. Its certainty: "sure."[d]—*God's everlasting covenant* (*v.* 5).—This covenant is—I. Divine in its origin: "He." *God* has positively made this covenant. II. Particular in its application: "with me." Here lies the sweetness of it to each believer. III. Everlasting in its duration.[e]

Last words (*v.* 1).—Of Albert Barnes: "These notes on the Book of Psalms complete my labours in endeavouring to explain and illustrate the sacred Scriptures. At my time of life—with the partial failure of vision, with which I have been afflicted for more than twelve years—with the other cares and burdens resting on me—and with the moral certainty that the infirmities of age, if I am spared, must soon come upon me, I could hope to accomplish no more—and I shall attempt no more." The final words of the Rev. Edward Perronet, author of the hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," were, "Glory to God in the height of His Divinity! glory to God in the depths of His humanity! Glory to God in His all-sufficiency! And into His hands I commend my spirit." The last words, too, of Rev. Dr. Backus, first President of Hamilton College, were, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

8—12. (8) **names,** comp. 1 Chr. xi. The text of this passage is corrupt, and should be corrected by help of 1 Chr. xi. 11.[a] *Adino Eznite* is an error, and has no place in Chr. If his name was Jashobeam it was not Adino. If he was Tachmonite he was not Eznite. (9) **Eleazar,** 1 Chr. xi. 12, xxvii. 4. **Ahohite,** patronymic formed fr. Ahoah, 1 Chr. viii. 4. (10) **clave,** stuck with long and hard clasping. (11) **lentiles,** or barley, 1 Chr. xi. 13. (12) **stood,** alone.

David's three mighty men.—Note—I. Each of these heroes did his best in the time of danger most valiantly, as if the successful issue of the conflict depended on him. II. Though each fought so well, it was God who wrought the victory (*vv.* 10—12). III. So in every conflict the battle is ours, but the victory is the Lord's.

A courageous king.—King James IV. of Scotland, who used often to amuse himself in wandering about the country in different disguises, was once overtaken by a violent storm in a dark night, and obliged to take shelter in a cavern near Wemys, which is one of the most remarkable of the antiquities of Scot-

David's last words

a "His 'last words' show, not only the full power and brilliance of his high poetic genius, but show also that the Spirit of God inspired him with thoughts purer, holier, and more sublime than those of earth."—*Porter.*

b "So he remains to the end; always with his family affections fresh and bright, his father and his early kinsmen never forgotten amidst his subsequent splendour."—*Stanley.*

c Ewald, Keil, Spk. Com.

"There are no words so obscure in this book (of Sam) as these two verses."—*Bp. Patrick.*

d J. East, M.A.

e C. H. Spurgeon.

David's mighty men, Adino, Eleazar, Shammah,

a Read thus: "The Tachmonite Jashobeam was chief among the captains; the same lifted up his spear against 300."

"True courage has so little to do with anger, that there lies always the strongest suspicion against it, where this passion is highest.

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True courage is cool and calm. The bravest of men have the least of a brutal bullying insolence; and in the very time of danger are found the most serene, pleasant, and free. Rage, we know, can make a coward forget himself and fight. But what is done in fury or anger can never be placed to the account of courage." — *Shaftesbury.*
b Percy Anec.

land. Having advanced some way into it, the king discovered a number of men and women ready to begin to roast a sheep, by way of supper. From their appearance, he began to suspect that he had not fallen into the best company; but, as it was too late to retreat, he asked hospitality from them till the tempest was over. They granted it, and invited the king, whom they did not know, to sit down, and take part with them. They were a band of robbers and cut-throats. As soon as they had finished their supper, one of them presented a plate, upon which two daggers were laid in form of a St. Andrew's cross, telling the king, at the same time, that this was the dessert which they always served to strangers; that he must choose one of the daggers, and fight him whom the company should appoint to attack him. The king did not lose his presence of mind, but instantly seized the two daggers, one in each hand, and plunged them into the hearts of the two robbers who were next him; and running full speed to the mouth of the cavern, he escaped from their pursuit, through the obscurity of the night. The king ordered the whole of this band of cut-throats to be seized next morning, and hanged.[b]

13—17. (13) **harvest-time,** Comp. 1 Chr. xi. 15. **Adullam,**[a] 1 Sa. xxii. 1. **Rephaim,** Jos. xv. 8; 2 Sa. v. 18. (14) **hold,** or fortress. "A frontier fortress on the Phil. border." (15) **well of Bethlehem,** "there is no well of living water in or near the town" now:[b] it may have been filled up. (16) **poured it out,** as a libation (Ju. vi. 20), or drink-offering. (17) **the blood,** &c. procured at the hazard of these men's lives.

David's desire for the water of the well at Bethlehem (*vv.* 15—17).—Consider—I. David's wish. Notice it as—1. Foolishly indulged; 2. Rashly countenanced; 3. Piously suppressed. II. The lessons to be learned from it. 1. How strong a principle is love; 2. How we should delight to exercise love towards our Lord Jesus in particular; 3. With what grief and indignation should we mortify every evil desire.[c]

Alexander's cup of water (*v.* 16).—There is an account very similar to this in Arrian's *Life of Alexander.* "Tunc poculo pleno, sicut oblatum est reddito: non solus, inquit bibere sustineo, nec tam exiguum devidere omnibus possum." "When his army was greatly oppressed with heat and thirst, a soldier brought him a cup of water; he ordered it to be carried back, saying, 'I cannot bear to drink alone, while so many are in want: and this cup is too small to be divided among the whole. Give it to the children from whom you brought it.'"[d]

18—23. (18) **among three,** or *the three,* that fetched the water. (19) **first three,** that is Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah. (20) **Benaiah,**[a] ch. viii. 18. **lion-like,** *ariels,* lions of God, very valiant men. **pit,**[b] cistern. (21) **goodly,** or man of stature: prodigious. 1 Chr. xi. 23. (22) **among three,** with Abishai, and poss. Amasa. (23) **first three,** as *v.* 19. **guard,** better, "made him of his privy council:" additional office to chief of the bodyguard.[c]

In jeopardy of their lives (*v.* 17).—See also 1 Chr. xi. 19. In these two passages the Hebrew is simply "that went with their lives." Not very unlike is the expression in 1 Sam. xix. 5, "For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine." So chap. xxviii. 21. Jud. ix. 17, M. R. "Cast his life far," *i.e.*

water brought to David

a "In Clermont Ganneau suggests the identif. of Adullam with Ayd el Mieh. Lieut. Conder has made a careful survey of this spot. He finds the ruins of an ancient town, strongly situated on a height commanding the broad valley of Elah" — *Pales. Explor. Reports.*
b Robinson.
c C. Simeon, M.A.

Abishai, Benaiah,

a 1 Ki. i. 8, 26, 32—40, ii. 25—35, iv. 4.
b "The pit was prob. near a house, and the lion was lying in wait for his prey." — *Wordsworth.*
c 2 Sa. viii. 18, xx. 23.
"When Homer maketh his brave captains march,

vv. 15—17. *R. P. Buddicom,* 2; *H. Melvill,* i. 163.
d Burder.

adventured it. Ps. cxix. 109, "My soul [*i.e.* life] is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget Thy law." What this means is explained in the next, and parallel, sentence. "The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from Thy precepts." The etymology of the English word has been variously given. We agree with Aldis Wright in taking it from *jeu parti*, an even game, in which the chances are equal. The analogy of "hazard" is, we think, strongly in favour of this view, "hazard" being an unlucky throw [not in the Old Testament]. Both terms took their origin from games of play, and were transferred to real life as well. Just so "Jacta est alea" was applied to the famous passage of the Rubicon. This idea is not in the Hebrew, however, with which we may rather compare, for instance:

> "Oh, when the king did throw his warder down,
> His own life hung upon the staff he threw."
> *Shakespeare.*[d]

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he gives them silence for guide. Contrariwise, he maketh cowards to babble, and chatter like cranes; the one pass along like great rivers, letting their streams glide softly with silent majesty; the others do nothing else but murmur like little brooks: a sign of not being valiant at all is to strive to seem valiant." — *N. Caussin.*
d H. F. Woolrych.

24–30. (24) **Asahel**, ch. ii. 32. **Elhanan**, ch. xxi. 19. (25) **Harodite**, comp. 1 Chr. xi. 27; Ju. vii. 1. (26) **Paltite**, fr. *Beth-Pelet*, Jos. xv. 27. **Tekoite**, ch. xiv. 2. (27) **Anethothite**, of *Anathoth*, Jos. xxi. 18. **Hushathite**, 1 Chr. iv. 4. (28) **Ahohite**,[a] *v.* 9. **Netophathite**, Netophah, a village, or cluster of villages, near Bethlehem. (30) **Pirathonite**, of Pirathon, Ju. xii. 13. **brooks**, "word means valleys with a running stream."[b] **Gaash**, Jos. xxiv. 30.

Asahel, and others

a Comp. 1 Chr. xi. 29.

b Spk. Com.

"All great men are in some degree inspired."—*Tully.*

The muster-roll of fame.—I. The earthly roll-call. Men ambitious of a place there. Deeds of valour win the place. Few find a place. II. The heavenly roll-call. Lamb's book of Life. Peaceful heroes. Unknown to fame, known to God. The men who endured hardness. Martyrs. The heroism of patience. The heroic battle of daily life. The brave struggle for honest bread. The service of Christ in trial, persecution, etc.

31–39. (31) **Arbathite**, prob. of *Beth-Arabah*, Jos. xv. 61, xviii. 18, 21. **Barhumite**, of *Bahurim*, ch. xvi. 5. (32) **Shaalbonite**, of *Shaalabin*, Jos. xix. 42. (33) Jonathan should be attached to this *v.* as son of Shammah, *v.* 25. **Sharar**, 1 Chr. xxvi. 4. (34) **Maachathite**, ch. xx. 14. **Gilonite**, ch. xv. 12. (35) **Carmel**, in S. of Judah, 1 Sa. xv. 12. **Arbite**, of Arab in Judah,[a] the name is however uncertain. comp. 1 Chr. xi. 37. (36) **Zobah**, ch. viii. 3. (37) **armourbearer**, 1 Sa. xiv. 1; 2 Sa. xviii. 15. (38) **Ithrite**, of Kirjath-Jearim.[b] (39) **Uriah**, ch. xi. 3. The number given is 31, but poss. Asahel's early death led to retention of his name, though his place was filled by another.

Abi-albon and others

a Jos. xv. 52.

b 1 Chr. ii. 53.

"I'll not disgrace my innocence by fear, lest I the saving of my life repent; I'll rather bear than merit punishment."—*Orrery.*

The brave youths of Iomsburg.—There is a northern tradition that Harold, King of Denmark, founded a city which he called Iomsburg, and sent thither a colony of young Danes, under the command of Palinatokes. This leader forbade his followers, even in the most imminent danger, to pronounce the word fear; he would have his people fight and die without yielding. Some youths from Iomsburg having attacked a Norwegian lord, were, after a very obstinate contest, made prisoners, and condemned to death. Far from dreading it, they contemplated it with joy, and the first of them said with an unmoved countenance, "Why should I not share the same fate as my father? he died, and so must I." A warrior, named Thorkill, asked the second what he

"Few minds are sunlike,—sources of light to themselves and to others. Many more are moons, that shine with a derivative and reflected light. Among the tests to distinguish them is this: the former are always full, the latter only now

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and then, when their suns are shining full upon them."—*Hare.*

c *Percy Anec.*

thought? He answered, that he knew the laws of Iomsburg too well to speak a word at which his enemies might rejoice. A third gave for answer to the same question, that he rejoiced at his honourable death, and infinitely preferred it to a shameful life like that of Thorkill. The fourth spoke still more plainly; "I suffer death with pleasure, and the hour is agreeable to me." The fifth and sixth died while bidding their enemies defiance. At last came the seventh, who was a youth of great beauty. When Thorkill asked him if he feared death, he answered, "No: I suffer it willingly, because I have fulfilled the highest duties in life, and have seen all those die before me whom I would have been sorry to survive."[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

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Joab sent to number the people

a "In Chr. the word *Satan* should be translated *adversary* It may have been one of his own counsellors giving bad advice." —*Sug. Spk. Com.*

b "The only satisfactory explanation of the measure is, that it was intended as the foundation of an organised and vigorous government, like that of Egypt or Phœnicia, under wh. the exact number of the houses and inhabitants of every city and village would have to be obtained, so as to be able to summon the people for general taxation."—*Ewald.*

c *Beecher*

1—4. (1) **again**, narrative joins on to ch. xxi. 1—14, but it seems a fragment whose place and time in Dav.'s history cannot be fixed. **he moved**, comp. 1 Chr. xxi. 1.[a] **number**, take census of.[b] (2) **captain**, or *and the captains*, as *v.* 4. (3) **why**, *etc.*, Joab was a clever politician, and judged this unwise fr. the *political* rather than *religious* side. He feared the introduction of the spirit of despotism. (4) **prevailed**, *i.e.* self-will against good counsel.

Numbering the people (*v.* 4).—Considerations upon census-taking. I. If the number is great, pride of national wealth and strength may be inflamed. II. If the number be small, there may be national depression. III. In both cases a tendency, among unbelieving people, to forget God. IV. In all census-taking there is One whose presence and favour are true sources of success.

David numbering the people (*v.* 1).—This verse should be translated, "Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, because one had moved David," etc.; or, by supplying from 1 Ch. xxi. 1, an adversary (Satan) had moved David. This translation fairly represents the meaning of the original, and avoids the difficulty involved in the present rendering.

Temptation.—Temptations are enemies outside the castle, seeking entrance. If there be no false retainer within who holds treacherous parley, there can scarcely be even an offer. No one would make overtures to a bolted door or a dead wall. It is some face at the window that invites proffer. The violence of temptation addressed to us is only another way of expressing the violence of the desire within us. It costs nothing to reject what we do not wish: and the struggle required to overcome temptation measures the strength in us of the temptable element. Men ought not to say, "How powerfully the Devil tempts I" but, "How strongly I am tempted!"[c]

the warriors of Israel and Judah

a *Wordsworth. Ewald.*

b *Spk. Com.*

5—9. (5) **pitched**, in soldier fashion, a temporary camp. **Aroer**, on S.E. before Rabba;[a] better to understand Aroer on the Arnon.[b] **river of Gad**, or valley toward Gad. **Jazer**, Nu. xxxii. 3. (6) **Tahtim-hodshi**, *nether land newly inhabited*: some error in the word prevents identification. **Dan-jaan**, Jos. xix. 47. (7) **Tyre**, Jos. xix. 29. **Beersheba**, Ge. xxi. 14. (8) **all the land**, on E. of Jordan fr. S. to N., W. of Jordan fr. N. to S. (9) **sum**, comp. 1 Chr. xxxvii. 23, 24.

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The valiant men of Israel (*v.* 9).—Cromwell's Ironsides were men that had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did. They were always victorious. They went into battle praying and singing psalms. Their watch-word was, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Every soldier had his pocket Bible of select texts for soldiers, and fed his soul upon the Word of God.

10—14. (10) **smote him,** conscience testified it was act of boasting and self-will. **said,** in confession and prayer, as Ps. xxxii. 5. (11) **up,** *etc.*, the morning after Joab's return. **Gad,** 1 Sa. ix. 9, why not Nathan? (12) **three things,** as punishment of this offence; signs of Divine recognition and judgment. (13) **answer,** graciously testing Dav. by this offer of choice. (14) **hands of the Lord,** the decision indicates Dav.'s trust in God.

Gad offers David a choice of trials

v. 10. *W. Reading*, iv. 1; *A. Roberts, Vil. Ser.* v. 17.

David numbering the people (*vv.* 11—15).—Notice—I. The severity of God in punishing sin. David probably had disobeyed the law (see Ex. xxx. 12—14). Moreover in this act he was impelled by pride, and confidence in an arm of flesh. II. The goodness of God in pardoning sin. III. The effects which the sins of individuals produce on the community.[a]

Our trials might have been greater (*v.* 14).—A man aged fifty years lived forty-eight of that time, and never knew what sickness was; but the last two years of his life he was sickly and impatient under it; yet at last he reasoned the case thus with himself: "The Lord might have given me forty-eight years of sickness, and but two years of health, yet He hath done the contrary: I will therefore rather admire the mercy of God in giving me so long a time of health, than repine and murmur at Him for giving me so short a time of sickness."[b]

v. 13. *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 312.

v. 14. *J. Boys, Rem.* 70; *E. Calamy, Farewell Ss.* 1; *Bp. Bevereidge*, vii. 208; *J. Braidsford*, 31; *T. Arnold*, i. 242.

a C. Simeon, M.A.

God never wounds with both hands.

b Spencer

15—17. (15) **time appointed,** three days, *v.* 13, perhaps meaning *time of the assembly*, or *evening oblation*.[a] (16) **upon Jerus.,** poss. indic. that pestilence was more severe in country than in the city. **threshing-place,** on a hill. Mt. Moriah, N.E. of Zion. **Araunah,** or *Ornan*,[b] I Chr. xxi. 15. **Jebusite,** so one left of the original inhabitants; poss. the king or ruler. (17) **sheep,** Ex. xxxii. 32; Jo. x. 11, 15.

the plague and David's prayer

a Spk. Com., Kell.

b "Original given variously as Aranyah, Havarnah, Haornah, Araunah, Ornan. Prob. the king of the ancient *Jebus*, and spared by Dav. for old friendship."—*Stanley.*

The angel by the threshing-floor (*v.* 16).—Note—I. The place. Its history. Its destined purpose. II. No man standing there could save. The angel of the covenant makes the sanctuary a place of salvation. III. Mercy went forth, at the angel's bidding from the threshing-floor. God's house a source of life and blessing for the homes of men.

Self-sacrifice (*v.* 17).—Two fishermen, a few years ago, were mending their nets on board their vessel on one of the lakes in the interior of Argyleshire, at a considerable distance from the shore, when a sudden squall upset their boat. One of them could not swim, and the only oar which floated was caught by him that could swim. His sinking companion cried, "Ah, my poor wife and children, they must starve now!" "Save yourself, I will risk my life for their sakes!" said the other, thrusting the oar beneath the arms of the drowning man. He committed himself instantly to the deep, in danger of perishing for the safety of his companion. That moment the boat struck the bottom, and started the other oar by their side, and thus both were enabled to keep afloat till they were picked up.

v. 17. *J. Wesley*, vii. 400.

"A weak mind sinks under prosperity as well as under adversity. A strong mind has two highest tides,—when the moon is at the full, and when there is no moon."—*Hare.*

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David builds an altar

"Unreflective minds posse s thoughts only as a jug does water, by containing them. In a disciplined mind, knowledge exists like vital force in the physical frame,—ready to be directed to tongue, or hand, or foot, hither, thither, anywhere, and for any use desired." —*S. Coley.*

a *Burder.*

David refuses Araunah's offer

a "It was the meeting of two ages, Araunah, as he yields that spot, is the last of the Canaanites; the last of that stern old race that we discern in any indiv. form and character. Dav., as he raises that altar, is the close harbinger of the reign of Solomon, the founder of a new institution wh. another was to complete."—*Stanley.*

b *Keil.*

c *Bp. Hall.* Comp. 1 Chr. xxi. 25.

d *U. R. Thomas.*

e 24. *T. Manton*, v. 1093; *T. Biddulph* iii. 217; *Dr. Chandler*, i. 33; *Dr. Wordsworth*, 77.

f *T. Fuller.*

18—21. (18) **go up,** this accounts for Dav.'s being at the threshing-floor. (19) **went up,** he had to descend fr. Zion, and then ascend Moriah. (20) **looked,** some intimation seems to have been given to him, or the procession was evidently an unusual one, and for an extraordinary purpose. (21) **stayed,** Nu. xvi. 48, 50.

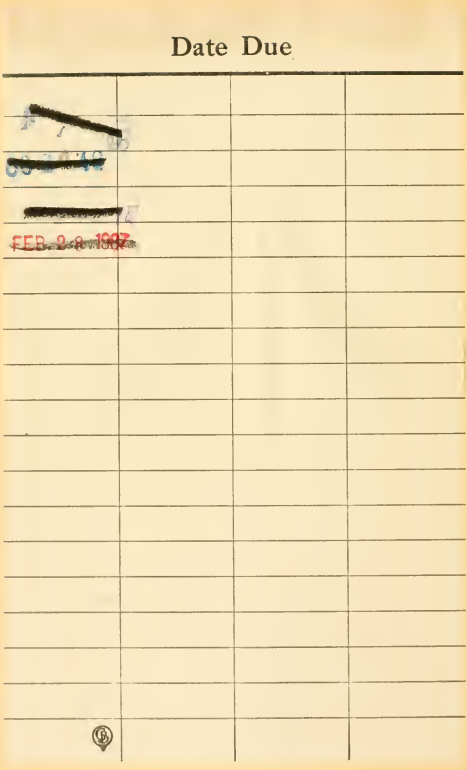
Eastern threshing-floors (*v.* 18).—Threshing-floors, among the ancient Jews, were only, as they are to this day in the East, round level plots of ground in the open air, where the corn was trodden out by oxen, the *Libycæ areæ* of Horace, ode i. l. 10. Thus Gideon's floor (Jud. vi. 37) appears to have been in the open air; as was likewise that of Araunah the Jebusite; else it would not have been a proper place for erecting an altar and offering sacrifice. In Ho. xiii. 3, we read of the chaff which is driven by the whirlwind from the floor. This circumstance of the threshing-floor's being exposed to the agitation of the wind, seems to be the principal reason of its Hebrew name; which may be further illustrated by the direction which Hesiod gives his husbandman, to thresh his corn in a place well exposed to the wind. From the above account it appears that a threshing-floor (rendered in our textual translation a void place) might well be near the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and that it might afford no improper place for the kings of Israel and Judah to hear the prophets in.[a]

22—25. (22) **Araunah said,**[a] with Oriental politeness. (23) **as a king,** "all these, O king, Araunah gives to the king."[b] (24) **buy it,** "it is heartless picty to desire to serve God cheaply."[c] (25) **intreated,** ch. xxi. 14.

Genuine service for God (*v.* 24).—The principle in these words applies to (*a*) worship, (*b*) work, (*c*) gifts, (*d*) personal religion. Three questions will show why we should not offer to God that which costs nothing. I. What benefit is it to yourself? What costs something (*a*) calls out highest motives, (*b*) employs all faculties. II. How far can it influence the world? Sacrifice the needed element in all great influence. III. How far can it be acceptable to God?[d]

The self-sacrificing minister (*v.* 24).—He will not offer to God of that which costs him nothing, but takes pains aforehand with his sermons. Having brought his sermon into his head, he labours to bring it into his heart, before he preaches it to his people; and surely that preaching which comes from the soul most works on the soul. The places of Scripture he quotes are pregnant and pertinent. The similes and illustrations are always familiar, but never contemptible. In his opinion reasons are the pillars of the fabric of a sermon, but similitudes are the windows which give the best light. He provideth not only wholesome but plentiful food for his people. He makes not that wearisome which should be ever welcome; wherefore his sermons are of an ordinary length, except on an extraordinary occasion. He counts the success of his ministry the greatest preferment. Yet herein God hath humbled many pains-taking pastors, in making them to be clouds to rain, not over Arabia the happy, but over Arabia the desert and the stony.[e]

END OF VOL. III.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